The Age of Decision

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THE AGE OF DECISION

BEING

FIVE SERMONS TO YOUNG MEN PREACHED AT CAMBRIDGE IN ST. GILES' CHURCH

WITH AN INTRODUCTORY ESSAY, AND A SERMON PREACHED AT CHARTERHOUSE ON FOUNDER'S DAY, 1900

BY

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OF THE SOCIETY OF ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST
COWLEY ST. JOHN, OXFORD

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PREFACE

I OWE the following pages to the editors of the *Church Times*, who thought fit to have a report made of some informal sermons lately preached at Cambridge. They have very kindly given me the report, and it has become my duty to allow the sermons to be reprinted as a book. Passages in the report which could not be disentangled have been omitted, and words in many places altered and restored. But no satisfactory revision can be attempted without altering and enlarging the general arrangement. The sermons therefore have nothing of the form which is necessary for even a brief permanence.

For example, the subject of the unity of our being is touched upon (at p. 58) in a manner which is far too concise for balanced expression. There are times when the

preacher is so immediately concerned with the truth of personal solidarity, and the claim of God over the whole man, that he must leave in silence both the diversity of operations within natural life and the tremendous distinction of the life which is regenerate and spiritual; both the character of reason as the critic of experience, and the character of faith as a Divine gift bestowed in Christ.

What is desired is simply to address *at this moment* a few hundreds of men in words which were heard patiently by a few scores. Perhaps, in spite of all the faults which admit of no partial cure, the sermons may provide an hour or two of useful reflection to some readers as generous and as quick to be interested as the Cambridge undergraduates to whom they were vocally addressed.

By way of introduction I have written down a few simple thoughts suggested by the character of the audience and by the remark of a wise friend whose prayers will, I am sure, accompany the rough little book on its way.

I have also added the substance, so far as I can recall it, of a sermon preached at Old Charterhouse on Founder's Day upon a subject connected with the others here attempted.

P. N. W.

COWLEY ST. JOHN, OXFORD,
Feast of the Holy Innocents.

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THE AGE OF DECISION

INTRODUCTION

YOUTH, νεότης, in classical reckoning, extends from about twenty-one to the verge of old age. So I heard Professor Ramsay say lately as he talked of St. Paul's life in Jerusalem. I run no danger, therefore, of suggesting anything like immaturity when I say that in the men who came on five Sunday nights, from cheerful college-rooms, after chapel and hall, over shining pavements, to assist at preaching which began at half-past eight, two characteristics were conspicuous—goodness and youth. Goodness and youth are, therefore, linked together for me by a special association, and I propose in the following paragraphs to consider one of the earliest fruits of goodness and one of the best parts of youth—namely, the faculty or virtue of courageous decision. I wish, that is, to inquire concerning youth in what sense,

if any, it is specially the age, or an age of decision; and this one may surely do without at all professing to exhaust even the heads of the subject, and especially without attempting to express the wonderful effects of Divine Grace. With no hope of covering a great deal of the truth, we may yet say something which is not untrue.

Is youth, then, at all the age of decision? It is plain, on the face of things, that the beginning of active life is the time when practical decisions of permanent influence are made. During these years the fancies of boyhood are abandoned or begin to be realised: the aspirations, the vocations of school-days are met by the first steps of obedience or neglect. Now, at any rate, to leave matters of faith on one side, the man "makes up his mind," or allows it to be made up for him, or at the lowest enters upon a course which presupposes a rational choice. Now he actually is set in the course which will lead him to the estate of a doctor, a merchant, a soldier, or a priest. Now, if he is to earn a living, he selects out of the ways open to him the way in which he will earn it. Now, if he is a dignitary of caste or of money, he takes the steps which will set him among

the politicians, the squires, or the leaders of fashion, or he trains for the high position of the man who is able to say like Horace Walpole, "I have never been anything." There is, therefore, a very plain and obvious sense in which youth is the age of decisions, and in a happily large number of cases the decision is made by the youth himself, made, of course, like all other choice under the limitations imposed by circumstance and constitution, and under the impulse of motives having various origins and various measures of authority and force.

Still, so far as there is any such thing as decision, in youth certain momentous decisions were made; and it is a striking subject for reflection that all the figures in the mixed hierarchy we see about us, the various marked characters of our national drama, the admiral, and the actor, and the dean, "the velvet-guards and Sunday citizens," even perhaps "the professional sad man" of our novelist, did actually, under the limitations of hereditary position and whatever else in this world of change is fixed, find their professions determined, though not their position in them, during the few short years which separated school-days from twenty-three, in many cases in the few weeks or days which

followed the winning of an entrance scholarship. Even these decisions of outward profession are of tremendous effect, but they cover determinations far more profound, determinations which were prepared no doubt and often foreseen very early in life indeed, but were made in the obvious sense we are employing, during a special period of life. This period is a little earlier for the future banker, and a little later for the future advocate, while for the admiral it comes very near the cradle, but for each of them it is the special period of decision, the significant overture of his *concerto* of life—for in this low point of view, the man's life is a *concerto* in which the melody of his special instrument is supported by the rich harmony of unselfish contemporaries. Is it not strange, then, that the work of choice which makes of the man a peasant or a postman, a missionary or a merchant, should be practically finished at the age which is antipodal almost to the age of judgment? It would seem sometimes as if one set of men, the elders, possessed all the materials for decision, and another set, their sons, possessed all the motive power to decide. The age of ripe judgment, of stored experience, seems often to lack not merely the opportunity

but the necessary *impulse* for effective choice, while the youth who makes minor choices all day long and every day drives a fresh nail into the rapidly completed coffin of professional prospects—the youth who cheerfully binds on the weight of unconceived obligations is precisely the man who has no particulars upon which to base the estimates of his adventure. He would never make war if he knew how many men the other king can marshal; he would never begin to build if he understood the reproach of those who are not able to finish. And it is the rarest thing at this stage for him to take advice. He *cannot*. He is so sure the elders do not *know*, do not understand. He has his own course to shape, and that in a new world, a world of the future which the elders have not seen, but which the young man sees in visions and must at whatever peril invade. And so it comes to pass that the new monarch cannot catch the wisdom of the previous reign. His father's counsellors give him the best advice, but he does not effectively know it until he himself is past the age of aim, and begins to reap the result of his independent decisions.

Yet advice is an appointment of God by

which to some extent the reasoned courage and prudence of age are put at the service of youthful energy. To a very much larger extent, and through stronger and happier communications, the wisdom and goodness of father and mother and elders guide the young man by means of his love and admiration of what he sees them to be, and by the unconsciously received or half-forgotten impressions of all the formative days of still earlier life.

At this point, and when endeavouring to take a mere common-sense view, we must not allow for the mysterious power of prayer, but we may allow for the direct influence of human spirit upon spirit, for the ripening, chastening, enlightening movements which pass direct from the loving anxious souls to the soul which is gaily incredulous of danger. But when we have allowed for all these, and many other communications, it may still be broadly stated that in the view of common sense most of the power of judgment is with age, most of the force of decision is with youth, and is by youth exercised independently. And this no doubt is an appointment of Divine Providence, and should cause us thought and wonder by its apparent

strangeness. The youth *cannot* in the nature of things possess developed rules of judgment, and yet he cannot in the nature of things defer the work of practical decision. He must, to take the commonest case of all, marry for the most part before he has tested his character and his patience. He must, if he is to be a priest, accept Holy Orders before in our modern slow development he is quite grown up. And God has really planted in him the power to make these and other like decisions. We are not to think that "it must be an ill-constructed tumbling world where the hour of ignorance is made the creator of our destiny by being forced to the decisive elections upon which life's main issues hang."[1] The elections *must* be made, and they cannot be made later. The very necessity points to a divine ordering, and those, as it would seem, are not really wise who plead for delay in all large decisions, who protest against nuns taking the vows before they are fifty, or young men choosing a missionary life before they are sure they

[1] Thus George Meredith describes "the idea (or vapour of youth taking the godlike semblance of an idea)" springing in the mind of a pure and noble creature; but "born of present sickness" imposed upon her by the Egoist's egoism.

can bear it. It is the old sage advice against entering the water before you can swim. Without action we can never be quite sure; and we only even approach to certainty when it is too late to act. There is need then to emphasise the prudence of adventure and to acknowledge with gratitude that God has *distributed* His gifts, so that while He usually reserves for experienced age the developed faculties of judgment, He bestows betimes on youth the intuition of tasks and the power to accept them, the vision and the courage to obey it.

Indeed the very absence of strictly sufficient grounds for confidence which is discerned in those who are yet practically and rightly confident may well lead us reverently to suppose that indeed the light of a Mind which is not their own is at their disposal, and moves them surely to the accomplishment of ends beyond their counsel. They are wiser than the aged, because they keep God's commandments; and conscience traces the line which logic cannot discern.

But while early life is thus really and rightly a time of decisions and of power in advance of knowledge, we refuse to accept the correlative statement, provisionally set in contrast

with it, that old age has knowledge without power, and that when at last all the materials for decision are ready no decision can be made.

The truth seems rather to be that youth is indispensably but not exclusively the time of adventure. If youth passes without decisions made and responsibilities incurred they will hardly be undertaken later, and both opportunity and power for them will become daily less and less; until at last the mournful stage is reached, where an accomplished criticism of life excludes from any active share in it, or the mere drudgery of bread-winning is maintained without hope or interest or gratitude to the Lord of the Vineyard.

But if, on the other hand, the golden years of adventure are fully used, and all the untried powers are generously committed to an ungauged task, then, as experience is gathered and mental fibre is strengthened, the character enlarged by work meets ever larger demands, not for refined criticism, but for effective and costly enterprise. We are not once for all to choose and for the rest of the years to glide in grooves, as if youth were a station-platform from which to enter a through-carriage for life's journey. Just the

opposite is the truth. Reject the early time of choice, and the element of choice progressively departs from life; but take the first momentous steps, launch the ship of life, and there can be hereafter no slackening of the watch; the eye must be ever on the needle or bared to the gusty scene ahead, the hand must be firm on the wheel, and every order from the guiding Voice listened for with unwavering devotion. It is not the man of chosen and bounden service, the man of accepted vocation, whose life becomes eventless, stereotyped, fixed in the lines of an arbitrary code. Rather, if experience and observation may guide us, it is the man of so-called freedom, the person without obligations, who is beset by the tyrant demons of monotony. It is precisely the rejection and not the acceptance of a life-long commission which condemns the man to the sameness of his old self-will, so shallow in its capacity of enjoyment, so *borné* in its invention of delights. But he who hearkens, who aspires, who commits himself to God's leadership, this is the man who in old age, even to hoar-hairs, is carried of God to ever wider prospects of duty and ever freer enterprises of obedience.

His old age, like his middle life, like his golden youth, is quite full of the thrill of repeated decisions. His vows only introduce him to daily experiences of the heavenly vision to which at the first he was not disobedient, and his mind stored with the lessons of experience, refined for delicate choice by all the tempering of discipline, is not overpowered by the weight of these stores, is not embarrassed by the keenness of his instrument of distinction, but carries together with the means the ever-new impulse for choice. This perhaps is the old man by whom the stored wisdom comes to the young—the young whom he regards with an almost reverent affection, and inspires with a hope surer and not less bright than the hopes of youth itself.

So then, youth is the age of decision in this sense, that if decisions are then shrunk from, the opportunity for them may never revisit us. But if they are then accepted with prayer and humility, and with all the advice we can bring ourselves to receive, life will not lack ever-fresh demands for choice, and old age also shall be full of adventure as it is full of faith. Or shall we rather say that such a life cannot grow old,

but in God and in His service and love continually renews its youth? Do we not see veterans bowed down by bodily infirmity who put to shame the languor of our still youthful days, and in every essential energy of life manifest the truth of the prophet's words: "Even the youths shall faint and be weary . . . but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength"? In them "though the outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day"; their spirits shine with the ardour of a perpetual youth, and the life of Jesus is made manifest in their dying flesh. These we reverence and would follow among the aged. And of the young men which do you envy? The men who can afford "to be nothing," and are that; the men who during the last ten years have turned away from the ministry of Christ as from an inconvenient and expensive profession? Or do you rather envy those who in every station and calling are bearing the burden of labour and responsibility, and, most of all, the men who came of age this year and are on their way, though we do not hear them yet, to the relief of God's poor people, and to fill up the skeleton battalions of the priesthood?

FIVE SERMONS

PREACHED IN ST. GILES' CHURCH

CAMBRIDGE

I

THE MAN AND THE CHURCH[1]

"And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful."—COLOSSIANS iii. 15.

IN the addresses I am allowed to offer to you, I hope to follow a line which is usually called personal; to think, that is to say, more particularly of the Christian man than of the Christian community; to direct our thoughts chiefly toward the stability and the advance and the perfection of each one of us considered, so far as that is possible, by himself; to say something of the elements of character, and something of the conditions of insight — of the nature and the laws of faith; to inquire how it comes to pass that men may see God. But such a line of thought, beginning from the individual as a centre, rather than from the Church and the community, may seem to you

[1] Preached in the octave of All Saints.

out of tune with those thoughts which are natural upon an All Saints' night, when we are taught to thank God because He has knit together all His elect in one communion and fellowship.

To-night, therefore, before we begin any of those studies of the individual life which God, in His mercy, may allow us to draw from the Holy Scriptures, let us pause to consider, and indeed to urge, that there is no real incompatibility between that kind of thought or that kind of religion which is concerned with the man, and that thought, or that religion, which is concerned with the Church, with the Body. There can be no solid progress until we are quite sure that there is no real alienation between the religion of the heart and the religion of the Church; between the awful claims of the body of Christ, and the interests of the individual soul. There is, indeed, a contrast, but there is no conflict; there is a difference, but no discrepancy, no contradiction, and no rivalry. For the difference is that difference which belongs to the two sides of one reality, and which often appears between facts which are related to one another as cause and effect.

Accordingly, I have chosen one of those

many sentences in St. Paul's Epistles in which the two aspects of Christian life are not only placed side by side within the small compass of one verse, but are shown as connected together in the true relation of cause and effect, so that we see in part the manner in which they are bound up one in the other. In this place St. Paul speaks of a blessing which is inward, which is personal, which is individual. "Let the peace of God rule in every Christian heart." Here is a matter which belongs to that private commerce which is between man and his God; that affair which is an affair of love, an affair of the heart. Let the peace of Christ rule in the heart of each one of you.

But while the Apostle's breath is still lingering upon words full of a meaning which is spiritual, moral, intellectual, personal, he proceeds at once to speak of that which is outward and far greater than the individual. "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts," he says, "unto which peace you were called in one body." Let peace be master within, because it was precisely to such a peace that you were historically called in one body; not called severally so as to become one body, but called in such wise that when you are called it was

one body that was called with you. Each Christian is called *in* the one body. None was ever called alone, for in the first calling of two or three already the body was one in Christ. By the first breathing of that call which is to sound until the end, the body was constituted. And yet the call, which is thus corporate, catholic, and, as they say, ecclesiastical; which introduces the man into an outward organisation, and places him in far-reaching relationships with countless souls; this call, by which "ye are called in one body," is yet at the same time a call unto a peace of Christ which is to rule each several heart.

I will not further attempt to open these words now, but will leave you simply to consider that here are the contrasted sides of Christian thought put in their boldest possible features; an inward peace of the once separate heart, and the outward, far-reaching unity of the one body; that they are put together in one sentence and in one breath by St. Paul, and related each to each, as cause is related to effect. The man is called in one body in order that he may in himself enjoy the peace of Christ. The peace of

Christ rules over the individual heart in order that the man may be knit up in the truest sense in one body. This peace is a matter of the consciousness. It belongs to the same order with the word of Christ, which is to dwell in us richly with all knowledge. It is, as we said, personal, individual, private. But the very peace which is to be umpire between rival impulses ; this inward treasure of the guarded heart; this peace which lies in the personal response to the personal love of God ; which is constituted, indeed, in a man's loving obedience, in the yielding of his will to the will of the Father ; this peace of Christ, than which nothing can be more intimate, and in a certain sense more special and singular, is the broad reality, the common public treasure unto which we are called in the catholic Church.

Here then are two facts bound together as cause and effect; not two forces, or (as you say in physics) two strains, but a double name for the one undivided strain of creating and sanctifying love by which God lifts up man first from nothingness into being, and then from solitude to union with Himself, guiding and ruling him by a peace which belongs to

Jesus Christ. "My peace I give unto you," is our Lord's word. The peace is called His, not only because He bestows it upon His own, but because it first ruled in His own heart. It is a treasure which was once wholly secret and peculiar to Christ Himself. It is still the secret treasure of each man as he finds himself Christ's own. It is, indeed, the substance and the reality for which the call into the one body, the call into the Church, was ordained. "Let, therefore, the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, for indeed it was unto this peace that ye were called in one body."

So let us strive to bring and to hold together these two aspects of the truth. We have need for resolution in such an effort, because on all sides we may hear voices which assure us that here are two views of Christian life which are irreconcilable. On the one side, we are told, there is a Christianity which is institutional, corporate, almost municipal; a Christianity which consists in an outwardly covenanted membership in a privileged body, an external submission—external, that is, in contrast to the inward life of which St. John speaks—an external though sincere submission; an obedience to

an organisation rather than vital union with an organism. And on the other hand, we are told, is a Christianity which belongs to the heart, which belongs to the mind, which is moral, which converts the man, which holds the reason, which illuminates the heart, which demands the will; which, above all things, rests in a personal communion between Christ and the believer; which brings each soul into immediate commerce with the Father of all. God forbid, my brethren, that there should be any Christianity which is other than this. We shall refuse to believe in any other, though we are perseveringly assured that there is, on the one hand, such an inward Christianity, and, on the other, a Christianity in which people are drilled into companies and battalions, are marked by badges to which they can point, and have their names inscribed in a register, so that they become assured by an historical record that they belong to Christ, and need not concern themselves with the conformity of their hearts to Him, or with the yielding up of their lives to His Love.

St. Paul shows us how false such a division is, how vain the attempt to hold either part

alone. In his thought we see joined, on the one hand, the corporate life, the call in one great body; and on the other, the inward peace, the joy of the soul which knows Christ. For him, catholic unity is positively one thing with inward tranquillity. It is well, even by repetition, to press this combination of thought as it appears in a single New Testament writer. Some even of those who are most earnest to maintain the real unity of Christian thought seem to suggest that this unity is discernible only when the whole New Testament is regarded. No doubt this is true in an important sense; but not in such a sense as to imply a considerable diversity of aim between the different holy writers. At times, in the just effort to display the substantial necessity to our faith of the various streams of teaching—St. John's, St. Paul's, St. James's, for example—each apostolic element is presented as if it really shared our modern incompleteness and one-sidedness. To put the matter for clearness' sake in extremes, St. John is represented as a kind of Quaker, and St. Peter, by a bold flight of imagination, as a kind of Ultramontane, and St. Paul as the typical Protestant.

To think in this way would surely be to forget that St. Peter, who is taken for the ecclesiastic, is the man who speaks to his people of Christ "the Lord, Whom having not seen ye love, in Whom, though now ye see Him not, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory." And St. James, who is supposed to be the legalist, tells us to "draw near to God, that God may draw near to us," and preaches a wisdom from on high which is really the presence of the Holy Ghost. St. John who is the mystic, who teaches us of Christ within, who points to the witness which we have in ourselves, who speaks of dwelling in God by dwelling in love—the same St. John was not only the penman of the Divine Epistles to the Seven Churches, in which surely corporate responsibility and corporate life are asserted in the most awful terms, but in his own third epistle names the Church, and dwells upon the Church, three times in the course of fifteen verses.

The contrasts between the holy writers become less simple as we study Holy Scripture for ourselves. They can only be maintained in a trenchant form by accepting clear-cut notions from a book of systematic theology,

and by looking up in the various writings of the New Testament only those passages which have been selected in support of the system. St. John and St. James have notes of the very teaching which we think of as most clearly in contrast to theirs, even as in St. Matthew there is a Johannine passage of prayer (Matt. xi. 25). St. Jude, who is in some respects the most "ecclesiastical" of all, who alone speaks of "the faith" almost in our modern sense of "the creed," is he who bids us "pray in the spirit and keep ourselves in the love of God." And when we turn to St. Paul, St. Paul the preacher of faith, who speaks of the "Son revealed in him," of Christ living in him, and in us, of "the Son of God who loved me, and gave Himself for me"—surely we know that this St. Paul is the very prophet of the Church as the body of Christ, the temple of the Holy Ghost, the pillar and ground of the truth, in which we are all built up together to be an holy temple of God by the Spirit. So true is this that from the impassioned prayer in which he begs that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith, he passes to the ascription: "Unto God be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages."

We are not attempting to define the limits of this Church of the New Testament. We are not urging our faith that it is no other than the Church we know. We are simply concerned to observe that the Church idea is present in the holy teaching, and in very many instances appears specially prominent in close connection with words which concern the individual life of faith.

The real discord in religion, the mark which really divides Christian people one from another, lies not at all in this, that some believe in the Church, and others believe in the soul. We have already seen that there is no substance in this distinction. The real contrast between Christian people, the thing which really makes a rift amongst us, is this. There are some who think or who teach that religion is a matter wholly mediated through the intelligence, altogether coming to us through the mind; that in it indeed we find access to God in love, but that this love is one which is moved by interests, by memories, by considerations, by the thought of what He has done for us—a religion which is ministered to us through thought alone. And the men

who may be fairly said to hold a position contrasted with this are those who believe, indeed, that God's truth illuminates the minds of men, but also believe that the stream of communication which is between Him and us is too broad to be confined to the mind alone; who do not think that Christianity consists only in certain ideas, however wonderful and touching, but in the communication of vast realities—realities of spiritual force, realities of communion, of the love of God in Christ, which go far beyond our minds' power to comprehend, and which are neither limited nor measured by our comprehension of them. Here is a real distinction; and in a right choice between these alternatives lies the possibility of unity in religion. For a man may entertain ideas, however general those ideas may be, quite alone by himself, and in his own mind. But he cannot in solitude be a participator of *life*. He cannot be singularly subjected to the power of the Holy Ghost. And accordingly we become one in believing, because that which comes from God to us, and lifts us from earth to Him, is not a thought merely, but a powerful stream

of forces and of love, a vast communication and endowment of realities, even the reality of the Divine Life.

The life unites and co-ordinates those who receive it, and therefore the acceptance of revelation by every single soul necessarily constitutes him a member of a vast organisation, or rather of a vast organism and body. It is thus that we come into relation one with the other by reason of our relation with God. The peace of Christ is more than a truth by which our minds are persuaded; it is a blessing by which our hearts are filled; it is a unity of being and thought and feeling with the Lord Jesus, God and man. Therefore it binds us into a Church, therefore it gives us admission into a body, and therefore, even as we examine our secret treasure, we find that it is the gift which we have in common with all believers, and which binds us up by our communion with the Head into one real Man whose heart continually pulses with the love of God the Father.

It is no part, then, of the business of the Christian man to make up his mind whether he shall be, on the one hand, catholic, faithful, obedient, and apostolic, or, on the other

hand, prayerful, loving, thoughtful, devout, and penitent. A Churchman who is one in reality and effect, daily labours to bring forth that treasure of union in which he is constituted by divine sacraments. He brings it forth in his personal inward knowledge and experience of the Lord; he brings it forth in his daily advancing obedience to the moral requirements of the Lord; in a daily growing conformity to the character of the Lord. There is no catholic life which is not at the same time personal, inward, spiritual, exacting, intimate, intellectual. The peace to which each was called in the one body must appear in his own secret, inmost centre, and rule there. There is to be a catholic character of the man. He cannot be a Churchman outside and a schismatic within, at war with himself. Inwardly there must be a realisation of that love of truth and of God, to which outwardly he is bound by his catholic profession, and towards the attainment of which he marches in the one body.

To-night I have run the risk of wearying you with thoughts which have about them an air of abstraction, although they are concerned with interests quite personal and direct. A

preface is often dry, and we have now done with everything in the way of preface. This is the ground we stand upon; that there is for us nothing alien in all which is most inward and most personal in the search for God. If we love the Church, it is our nearest concern to press on in the individual adventure after holiness. So we receive these words from the Apostle: "Let the peace of Christ be the ruler in your hearts, because it is to that peace that ye were called in the one body," which is the Church.

II

RESPONSIBILITY AND POWER IN THE POSSESSION OF FAITH

"I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the Word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the evil one."—1 JOHN ii. 14.

"I HAVE written unto you, young men," says the Apostle, "because ye are strong, because the word of God abideth in you, and because ye have overcome the evil one." For St. John, therefore, the note of the young men—not the children, but the young men—is that strength and faith are theirs; conflict and victory. The old men have passed on to contemplation; they know Him—Him they have believed in. The children accept the news of God as their Father, and pardon through the saving Name. They have learnt the truth of regeneration; they have received the spirit of adoption; they understand that they have become the sons of God; they know the Father, and their sins are forgiven. There is the stage of beginnings for the children, named perhaps in our wider

modern sense of "the young." As for the old men, they have gone further; they "know Him that is from the beginning." They are like St. John himself, who bears witness to the Divine reality of Jesus Christ, the Word who in the beginning was with God. But the young men, those who are in the early prime of life, have for their characteristic, not the earliest peace of regeneration, or the earliest obedience of instruction. They are in the conflict—they are strong; the Word of God abideth in them and they have overcome the evil one.

The strength, the conflict, and the enemy are named again by St. Paul, who writes to the Ephesians: "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil . . . that ye may be able to stand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand."

These words, and words like these, came home with a tremendous force of reality to the Christians of the first, or nearly the first age. The strength of those believers was compacted and manifested in open trials. You may have read how, cherishing the

word of God in their hearts, they underwent for months and for years sometimes, in a period not very long separated from St. John, actual physical training in order that they might be able to bear scourge and torture in their Christian trial, when they suffered for the name of Christ, for the word they kept in their hearts. In those early days the strength of the Christian and his apprehension of Christ lay in his sufferings. Our fathers clasped and held Him, the Lord, not by the diligent framing of intellectual conceptions which was the work of a later age, but by the actual, substantial yielding of their bodies and souls to bear the enmity of the devil, in conformity with Christ and in communion with Him. In their martyrdom, their witnessing, was the very security of the faith to which they witnessed. They apprehended God *thus*, in blood and in tears; and they overcame the evil one by the blood of Christ, with whose blood their own blood was mingled, and by the word of their testimony. In the Revelation, St. John says that the testimony of Jesus, that which makes manifest His truth in the world, is the spirit of prophecy, the spirit

of utterance. It was by the same spirit that these first martyrs held on in flame and against the sword in their substantial, bodily, mental, and spiritual adherence to Christ the Lord. Thus they were strong in that age. It belonged to the young to be trained for martyrdom; trained for the heroic confession of their faith in God. In the face of a world in arms, they stood equipped with the armour of God, standing in the evil day, by which St. Paul perhaps meant the day of persecution; withstanding the enemy, the devil; conquering by the blood of Jesus Christ, and by the word of their testimony. It was Divine grace alone by which any one of them was able to stand. Yet their own deliberate preparation was evidence of their willingness to suffer and the hope in which they endured.

We remember with reverence the immense contrast between such a life and ours, but still in the light of their example we recognise that we also have our special task in this our day; and now our priceless time of training. Let us to-night spend some thought, first upon the responsibility and the priceless opportunities of the age in which you stand; and then, if time allows, upon that

which must be the foundation of your strength and of your fidelity, of your valour and of your victory; let us think, that is to say, of our holy faith, which is the primary factor of our adherence to Christ and of our inherence in Christ, in Whom is all our strength.

I. And first of responsibility. The change which fifteen years of practical life in the world brings to us is already great: it brings an enormous increase of reverence and respect for men of the time of life at which you stand. When we "went up" in our turn, we failed altogether to understand the deep interest and respect which was felt by our elders for the companions whom we joined. There were superficial follies, of course, in our lives, and we under-rated the importance of our own doings, and the doings of those round about us. But now, when one has left all that behind, and lived in circles which are very different from those of university life, and has learnt also how few are the opportunities to reshape a course in later days, a man finds himself in possession of a great gain, an honest reverence and regard for those who are of your age.

Looking back, we see how great was the importance of the actions in which those happy years were spent. One sees this by the example of lives whose direction was settled at that time. One sees it in the powerful work which is now done for the country by men who were one's own contemporaries, familiar figures. Some lead or help in the great work of Empire overseas; others are prominent in politics. Many of the most vigorous clergymen are of such a date as that; they were formed so short a time ago as that of which I speak. We saw about us, in those years, men of all kinds who seemed good and strong, but at the time we discounted our admiration; we supposed that every one when at college imagined his contemporaries to be great men in the making. And now, after a short lapse of years, it proves not that we over-rated the importance of those we knew, but that our first natural thoughts of them were just. They have really turned out to be Christian men of force and light. The characters which were displayed already in the University are the characters which are now known in the Empire. The gentleness, the meekness, and

the faith which were then unseen in the quiet corners of the college, are now brilliant secretly in the hidden service of the Lord. Men who were quiet, faithful, and industrious then, are even now standing in the hardest and most obscure places to maintain the Gospel among the poor, the heathen, and the outcast. There is a leper island in the Southern Hemisphere, to which much of the light, and strength, and joy which prevail there comes through the uncalculating devotion of men whom we saw, it seems yesterday, cheerful and happy in a cheerful Oxford college.

The truth is that our aim is fixed in the time when we are undergraduates. This is not like the time of childhood, nor like the years at school, when we played and worked and ruled in a world which, for all its marvel and interest, was after all a world in miniature. No one, of course, will again in life be quite so great a person as the boy who was among the first four or six in the Sixth Form. You must not hope for that. But, after all, those days of power and dignity were lived in a miniature world. When you are here it is no longer

so. The currents of the real world run here. There is a real community of life between the undergraduate and the learned scholars or well-known men of affairs who are the senior members of his college. And, again, all the powers of the young man are now complete; there is nothing quite new for him to gain. His mind will be a more trustworthy guide in times to come, but it will never perhaps be a keener, stronger instrument. His bodily constitution will gain firmness, and, too probably, weight, but it will never be more supple, more alert, swifter or fuller of vitality. His soul has much to learn, much to do, much to suffer, much to manifest, but it will never be a fresher, stronger thing so far as natural equipment goes, than it is now. The sacramental gifts, the grace of the Spirit, the hearing of the Word, all have already been bestowed in seminal completeness, and their effect is to grow in use. All, all is in your hands, and the character which is formed here is likely to become, in certain respects, stationary. No doubt our friends often observe in us with regret the mode of thought, the limitations of opinion, the

general aim, which were evident years ago, and to this day are hardly altered at all.

God forbid that one should say this in a spirit of discouragement for such as myself, who feel sadly that we have shot our bolt and missed. For everybody who knows he is wrong there is the opportunity to try again. But suppose we never know? On the one hand, there is never a day of despair, when we should look back and say, "Our chances went by then, long ago, at Cambridge." But on the other hand, there must be now a day of vigorous endeavour, and a vast belief in your own importance, and in the importance of the life that you lead here; and this for the sake of the England that is to come. One might almost say that everything for England depends upon the formation of the minds and purposes of you, gentlemen, and such as you. There are, indeed, other classes who are not yet in contact with our University life, whose minds and whose purposes are of vital importance—of immense, and even now unrecognised importance. We cannot say now, as once could be said, that the whole stream of public policy is held in

the grasp of those who form minds in such places as this; but we can still say there are no forces, however far afield they spring, no power in the nation or in the Church, with whose interests you are not concerned, and with whose future you may not, if you like, mingle, and whose effect you cannot almost determine. Think what it is to stand here and to have the future of England, of the Empire, and of the Church, depending upon your vitality, upon your energy and your prudence.

It is indeed for you and for such as you to labour at the restoration, the revival of religion. Do not suppose that this work is done. Our religion at this moment halts and wavers. It is your great task to restore its simplest elements: the worship and the fear of Almighty God. You have to restore these in our great desponding populations of London, in the vast cities, and in the desolate fields; populations which are so burdened by the task of keeping body and soul together that they have no leisure and no heart for problems which do not seem to be concerned with the interests of their daily life. It is to these, by consolation, by encouragement, by

leadership, by devoting the keenest powers to the consideration of their needs—it is to these your brethren, that you are to restore liberty of soul, that they may rise up and claim their heritage in God. It is for you to make the Empire Christian; it is for you to render politics once again a deep and powerful stream of life, containing in itself a real debate, having in it real parties, real conflicts, enough strength to provide an opposition as well as a ministry. It is for you to purify the literature and the stage of our country, which even the Church has now ceased to examine and, when need is, to rebuke. It would seem, from what we hear, that in spite of much which is noble and true in some quarters there was never greater need for discrimination than now, and in certain directions for the gravest rebuke. But instead of rebuke we have the silence of the wise, and the apathy of the pure. These things it rests with you to do, to guard the interests of purity, to expose and destroy the ridiculous convention by which we allow our populations, and our society, and our family life to be corrupted by any worldling who chooses to offer us a counsel which is supposed to

be more human and more penetrating than the lessons of the Gospel;—the convention, I mean, by which we tolerate upon the stage teaching which we banish from our houses.

Since all this lies with you, and so much more; since it is you who must be the friends of the poor, the new rulers of England, the lawyers and the priests, the soldiers and pioneers of our race, see to it that in your time of formation you make strong resolves and lay clear plans, that you do not waste and squander that precious youth which is the only power under God by which, through grace and faith, these works can be attempted. Your days must not wither in idleness, nor your minds be petrified and enfeebled by conventionality, fashion, or carnal pride. Above all things, your intelligence—for it is your intelligence which is at stake—must never be sapped and poisoned by profligacy. For whatever recoveries a profligate may make—and in God's mercy he shall, by grace and pardon, one day find a place in heaven—yet he will never here recover the keenness of judgment, or the nicety of mind, which might have been his. What-

ever else can be, intellectual supremacy, leadership, and refinement can never be the possession of the man who has degraded his body and his mind in fleshly sin. Let us not deceive ourselves about this. There is no limit to God's pity; there is no sin which the Precious Blood cannot wash away. But God's laws are not dethroned by His pardon and mercy, and a man may as well enter for a three-mile race with a sprained foot and think by a profound resolution to outstrip his competitors, as suppose that by any diligence whatever the mind which is gravely stained by profligacy can be the weapon of keenness and the measure of sanity which God meant it to be. No; there is in this world no release from the penalty of stupidity or extravagance which necessarily and always falls upon a life of vice.

Do not, therefore, allow your days to be wasted in vacancy, your spirits or mind petrified by fashion; do not allow your intellectual powers and your immortal soul to be invaded, the very sinews of your minds to be sapped, by profligacy or anything approaching it; and, above all things, do not suffer the marvellous gift of faith to be

obscured and thrown into complications by vain questioning. Let nothing obliterate those great frontiers of thought, those great measures of reality, which through the long history of humanity, under the fostering care of God, and in these last days by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, have been worked out and planted firmly in the fields of darkness which lie round about us. Hold them as a possession. Do not suppose that they are on their trial before the tribunal of material experience alone, but rather consider that they have their foundations and their authority within. With these as our weapons and apparatus we advance to consider and to judge the material of carnal experience. About this I hope to speak some other day, when we try to examine the conditions of faith. To-night I will only urge you to hold fast to that treasure of faith which God has already bestowed upon you. Guard all the sources of your strength ; consider the enormous opportunities which belong to you ; never think that it is the part of modesty or of humility to suppose that what we do is of no importance. Never say, "My efforts can make no difference to the world ; there are

plenty of others to work and to think." Rather let each one bear himself and hold himself as if all depended upon him—all the future of our race, the integrity of our blood and state, and all the light, clearness, and joy of the holy Church unto which God has brought us by His mercy, and given us an active and effective part.

This is, indeed, the real motive, the strongest of all motives for courage, for diligence, for valour, for doing our own part, for stirring one's self up to labour when one would gladly rest, for going to the task of study, if one is a student, for bearing up under the stress of poverty, for doing boldly our part in the army, the navy, or the duller heroism of civil life. The strongest of all motives is that which is supplied by the thought that we have a place in the body. This truth braces a man for his work; this gives him courage to face poverty or obscurity, or exile, or discredit, or hostility, or loneliness; and whatsoever the time which is to come may bring forth he will endure with constancy when he considers that God has set him in the body, the member in his place, and that there is no member which is not absolutely necessary

to the integrity, health, and vigour of the whole.

II. Although it is already late, I will say one word about that faith which is the foundation of our strength. For a sermon must be practical, and must have regard to the fact that a man may be at a disadvantage to-morrow in his constant fight with sin if the thought which is put before him is quite unbalanced. Let us, therefore, take a few more minutes in order to consider that faith in God which is the indispensable foundation of our strength. I believe that I am to-night speaking mostly, or altogether, to men whose faith has grown up unshaken, perhaps hardly knowing doubt; but there are many with whom it is otherwise, and some of the best and fairest souls know all the bitter emptiness of that gloom which they believe to be unbelief. That which they think to be denial is really the crying out of their souls after God. The very hunger which they feel, the very sense of darkness, bear witness to their need of Him and are evidence of the root of true desire. But they do not know this, and speak harshly of the light their eyes still seek and find not yet. In view,

then, of the fact that we live in a place of intelligence and restless curiosity, where there must be many to whom religion seems to be nothing, and where, if we bear a manly part, we shall find our faith attacked, I beg of you to remember one plain and simple truth. It is a truth of reason from which there seems no escape—namely, that the need of faith, the demand for a belief which outruns experience and antedates proof, is absolutely and in the abstract inseparable from the condition in which men find themselves upon earth.

There are those who seem to think that religion is a firm structure in its main extent, but that here and there it shows a chasm; here and there a place which ought to be a staircase turns out to be a well; and these leaping-places they call the difficulties of the Christian religion. Here, we are apt to suppose, the need of faith comes in. We think, I mean, of faith as an occasional disconcerting necessity in a march which is generally conducted upon other principles. My brethren, faith is no exceptional incident in a Christian life. Faith is not the weapon which we use, or the means which we em-

ploy upon some occasion when we arrive at a barrier which cannot be overleaped by reason, or a gap in the foundation under our feet, for which no plank of proof lies ready as a bridge. Now is demand, we think, for a few strokes of uncertain swimming to win the farther side and the renewed security of carnal experience. This is not faith. Faith is no desperate remedy for the disasters of intelligence; no occasional tragedy of the Christian life. It is the complete substance of that life. For our religion is all compact of faith through and through. It knows everything by faith. It never makes its first step except by faith. It is, so to speak, always aloft, always in the air; it has launched itself into the blue, and its safety consists in continuing to soar. It has nothing to gain essentially from any of those things we know by other measures.

These facts it illuminates and uses, and in its use of them obtains fresh security, a security in the experience of its own mastery. But the beginning of knowledge is in faith; and this faith is abstractedly and of necessity indispensable to true intercourse between God and man for this reason. The relation

between God and man is a relation between two spiritual beings, and there can be no spiritual relationship between two spiritual beings except by a spiritual nexus, and this cannot be established in any other conceivable way but by the way of mutual confidence. There is no other way by which historically such a relation has been established; and there is in the realms of consideration no other conceivable way by which it could ever be. There may be a relationship between two spiritual beings which is not a spiritual relationship. There is, besides their personal and spiritual tie, the local relationship between the baby and the mother who holds it in her arms. They are both of them immortal souls, but the relationship considered here is not a spiritual one. In strictness, let me state again, there can be between two spiritual beings no spiritual relationship of intercourse except by way of mutual confidence. Test this statement in any way you please—in thought and in experience—and you will find it true. Can a man gain a friend without faith? Can a man win a friend on the condition of knowing beforehand whether he is faithful, whether he is worthy or not? A

man may get a servant or a master on these terms; he cannot get a friend. Does a lover find one to love on any other path except the path of mutual trust? Will anybody who is worth winning be your wife if you require references and proofs of eligibility? Can a betrothal take place on a footing of trial, and with the understanding that it is to lapse in case of dissatisfaction? We never enter into a personal relationship with another at all except by a venture which makes, to start with, the assumption that the other man exists. That he is decent, that he is reasonable, you say, we know by looking at him. Yes, the looking at him awakens in you a certain faculty within, which you may call, if you please, intuition, but which I call, in the common language of religion, faith. You say you knew beforehand. You knew beforehand by faith; you trusted. A man whom you did not trust would not consent to be your friend. You cannot say to a man, "I like you, but I am not sure of you. I am inclined to be your friend, but can you prove your qualities first?" You can never after such a word win him to be your friend except by such a repentance as can scarcely be

achieved. No, the one method, the absolutely indispensable way to a personal relationship with any other person, is the way in which you trust him and so secure his trust.

The whole necessity of faith, the whole reason why God does not prove to us in black and white all His statements, all His promises; why He does not display His presence to the doubters, or His secret to them that fear Him not; why He calls upon us to yield our hearts before He gives the answer of His heart to us, is not that He grudges us information which might so easily be given, but that He designs for us the infinite and unspeakable promotion of His friendship. Faith is the mark of our intimacy, of our being no longer slaves. This is why He reserves His manifestations; this is why He keeps back His proofs; this is why He demands confidence; not in some niggard grant of half-measures of revelation to eyes which yearn for His beauty, but because He designs for us the gift of His heart. Therefore it is that before He shows His face He sends forth His voice to us in invitation, saying, "My son, give Me thine

heart;" in order that we, giving our hearts, freely answering to the voice which yet does not wholly authenticate itself, may discover a courage which grows by obedience, and may find ourselves confronted with abundant manifestations. He requires our trust, our adventurous trust, because it is His will that our own hearts should come into personal relationship and love with the Father, to know Whom is everlasting life. Think generously of this faith which is required of us. The demand should not be met with fretful discontent, as if a harsh teacher were hiding from us the answer to some problem which we require for a mortal success. We must rather welcome it with thanks as the ennobling invitation of the Lord Himself—a mark of the friendliness, the love, the tender pity, the unspeakable honour with which He regards us. He holds back from our eyes the evidence—the sensible evidence—of His majesty only in order that in the darkness of the world our hearts may feel after Him and find Him; may find that which is much better than majesty, far sweeter than any glorious showing forth of His unseen beauty,—namely, the treasure of His heart, the bounty

by which He yields *Himself* in a marvellous kind of equality or interchange of personal life. For in Jesus Christ, God Three in One bestows Himself upon the children of men who are content to believe the voice which came to them from Him through the lips of the same Jesus Christ our Lord. He, the Lord, refuses to us the satisfactions of sensible proof or the security of a merely logical conviction, because He reserves for us a place upon His Throne, which is the Throne of Love. Cherish, therefore, this faith; never think that weakness is here; and in that faith be strong and valiant, and console us who, from a standpoint so little in advance, have so much failure to report. We who speak to you with so slight a vantage of experience have yet abundant reason to appeal to you to do better than we have done; to put a better twenty years between your early vigour and your full maturity; to make your record clear; to bring to middle life faculties more brilliant and better stored and exercised; and above all things, more richly stored and more bravely exercised in the joy and love and fellowship of the Holy Ghost.

III

TRUTHFULNESS AND INSIGHT

"That we may be no longer children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error; but speaking truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him, which is the head, even Christ."—EPHESIANS iv. 14, 15.

IT was my intention to have spoken to-night of the conditions of faith, the laws of spiritual insight. This was desirable in order that it might appear that in speaking boldly as we did last week about the joy and the duty of faith we were not pointing to a state of mind which we can create for ourselves. I would gladly, if I can find an opportunity, attempt to show that faith is nothing else but a science of the soul, a science strictly governed by ascertainable laws, which, as we grow in knowledge of them, clearly distinguish for us true faith from a mere self-flattering acceptance of welcome statements or ideas. Faith is the real sight of God, and it is doubt-

less governed by laws as definitely, at least, as is the knowledge of earthly things, or the advancement of any science or study.

But I turn away with some reluctance from such thoughts, because I fear they may appear uninteresting, or be in fact unnecessary to those whose confidence in our holy faith is altogether untroubled; and I approach instead a subject which is quite clearly practical—the subject of personal truthfulness. And yet, indeed, as we think over this subject, it may appear that we are after all studying the main condition, or one of the main conditions of faith. For almost the fundamental condition of believing is, surely, nothing less and nothing other than the personal truthfulness which is so hard and so familiar a duty.

Let us consider a little the meaning of St. Paul's words. He is urging his disciples not to live a life which is casual and accidental, which is carried about "with every wind of doctrine," or regulated by the craft of evil men,[1] but to speak the truth in love, and so in all things to grow up into Christ Who is the Head.

[1] Κυβεία is said to have reference to loaded dice, and the words which follow imply a deliberate malice and a system of deceit. In Eph. vi. 11, μεθοδεία belongs to the devil.

You know, to begin with, that the phrase "speaking truth" represents a word which means much more than speaking only. The word ἀληθεύοντες means having to do with truth in every way—speaking the truth, dealing the truth, doing the truth, and even receiving the truth.[1] The state which St. Paul here commends is the same as that which St. John calls walking in the truth, abiding in the truth—that truth which, he says in his second epistle, abideth in us and shall be with us for ever. With something of this wide meaning, St. Paul bids us "do the truth in love."

In the first place, then, he calls upon us for more than the utterance of truth, something harder than saying the thing which seems to us to be correct. He calls us to live in something which appears to be almost a substance, and certainly a sphere, possessing a certain quality. His word is in tune with what St. John says of our being "in the truth and in Him Who is true;" it is a word which falls under the purpose of our Lord's own prayer to His Father—"Sanctify them through Thy truth; Thy Word is truth." It is a state of which St. Paul speaks; the state of living in

[1] In the Latin Vulgate it is "veritatem facientes."

the truth. And observe in the second place that he calls us to it as to something which lies in some measure within our own power and resolution. We are to choose this state, this sphere of truth. We are resolutely to turn away from another sphere—the sphere of uncertainty, the sphere which St. John calls the darkness; we are to shun this sphere of lying, and hatred, and self-deceit, and we are to walk instead in the truth, in the light. As Jesus Christ is in the light in unchanging perfection, so we are to advance in the light, to grow more native to it; and dealing the truth in love we shall grow up into Christ in all things, because He is full of grace and truth.

This truth, then, in the first place, goes beyond the mere utterance of true words, though this we know is difficult enough for us, in face of our ignorance, our cowardice, our pride and vanity. Far ahead is even that first gift. Far ahead of us is the right to say that we always speak the truth, on the one hand with courage and manliness, and on the other with real humility and self-knowledge; very far is it from any man to speak the truth with no drawback of ignorance or mistake. Yet St. Paul, and God through him, calls upon us for

something more even than that truth-speaking which we cannot attain to—to live out the truth, to do the truth, and to grow in conformity to the truth ; to turn away from all darkness, debate, confusion, ignorance, malice, and cunning ; and to live instead in the kingdom of Jesus Christ, which is not only the kingdom of peace and of mercy, but, as the Old Testament has taught us long ago, the kingdom also of faithfulness and truth.

This walking in truth is, we said, a condition, and almost the principal condition, of coming to know the fulness of truth. And this fact, though it is so plain, is one which needs emphasising and urging in every possible way at the present time. For it indicates what lies deeper—namely, that our life, although it is of many parts and aspects, is altogether one life. The power, the faculty, the *sensorium* (if you will bear the word) by which we receive the eternal truth of God, by which we know His infinite beauty, and coming into His freedom are made free through the truth ; this same faculty by which indeed we hold and obey the catholic faith, is precisely that by which a man strictly fulfils his duties, carefully turns his book, and gives

a right answer to a plain question. That is to say, a man has not two persons in himself to deal with. We may speak, if we like, for convenience' sake, of different faculties as if they were different things—thought, memory, and will; but it is one man who is concerned in all the contrasted experiences. There is not one set of faculties and powers for dealing with common life, and another set of faculties and powers by which we apprehend spiritual truth.[1] We are changed, indeed, by regeneration; we are lifted up to a new and exalted state which is rightly called a new birth, which brings us into a new relation to God, which gives us the adoption of children and membership in Jesus Christ. But regeneration is something much more and something different from a new natural constitution; something far more fundamental than would be the addition of a set of faculties. It is the person which is regenerate, and the nature which was ours before regeneration is the same nature which in regeneration receives new and glorious opportunities. And in our regenerate life, if we walk in the Spirit we walk by the power of a heavenly life, but we

[1] See Preface.

walk with the very same mind, soul, and limbs, as those with which we may still, alas! walk according to the flesh. Even now all those incomings of God which are summed up in the word faith come to this one being of ours which alone we have to use. The faith which supports us in our labour and conflict, so precious that to possess it is our greatest privilege, and to maintain it in ourselves the greatest service we can render to others—this faith, I say, comes to the same being, the same faculties as those by which through grace we fulfil our ordinary duty and speak the ordinary truth.

Consequently we must part for ever with the idea that we can be careless in our conduct, or slipshod in our statements, or idle in our inquiries, and yet enjoy without disturbance all the blessings of faith.

Doubtless there are other sins besides falsehood which disturb faith, sins by which we leave the standard of Christ and adhere instead to the standard of pride or of sensuality. Such sins, such defections, of course make His service seem dim and strange, and His kingdom distant and unreal. François Coppée, a French poet of great distinction, has described with

singular frankness and humility his return to faith after years of estrangement. He insists that in his own case, and he thinks in that of others, the loss of faith came through a simple, ordinary, common thing—a failure of loyalty to the standard he had promised to follow. My case, he says, has no distinction. It was the common case of a deserter, who becomes a deserter because he is tired of discipline.[1] His humility may well teach us. We cannot be cowards and deserters to our friends or our engagements, and find ourselves at the same time free men, worthy to claim access to the mysteries of the universe of God. Truthfulness is of one piece with insight. There is but one word in the New Testament for the two ideas. For πίστις, you remember, which means supernatural faith, means also faithfulness. It is faith and fidelity; trust and trustworthiness. It is doing the thing which is brotherly and fair. There is a faith toward the Lord Jesus which is faith toward all Christians.[2] The

[1] "Mon cas, on le voit, est très banal. Ce fut la vulgaire desertion du soldat las de la discipline. Je ne haïssais certes pas le drapeau sous lequel j'avais servi; je l'avais fui et je l'oubliais, voilà tout." *Préface. La Bonne Souffrance.* François Coppée, de l'Académie Française.

[2] So Philemon v. 5, if the construction is exact.

virtues which appear so various are yet of one quality, and that activity of the soul which renders to each his due, is, under the power of the Holy Ghost, raised up to such vigour that it is able to apprehend the eternal truth of God.

This, then, I would beg you to lay to heart—that a man's life is indeed one life, and that the truthfulness by which we bear ourselves aright among our fellows is one with the power by which we enter into the knowledge of God in holy faith. We must say good-bye to all trifling with truth in our common life. There must be fidelity to what we know, as the first condition to further knowledge. No foolishness seems greater than that of a man who, having departed from the standards of duty which once he held as sacred, offers himself as a judge of absolute truth, even of God Himself. Such a man knows himself to be faithless in the small things; he has not done the things which by his own admission he confessed to be good; which of us has? But it is, indeed, hard to see how one who acknowledges defection from the known good can yet rise to such heights of independent

judgeship as to be able to set aside the belief of others in the being and in the love of God, and to pronounce against that belief in tones of superior honesty.

Fidelity to existing engagements is the very beginning of discovery, and faith itself is one thing with honesty. It is a movement of the whole life and, except so far as it is maintained everywhere, it cannot be maintained especially in the region of speculation, it cannot avail for discerning the secret of this mysterious world of ours. We have to begin by being true in the small things, and as we grow true in these, God, by His Holy Spirit, will reveal to us with continually greater clearness the great truths concerning His own spiritual and personal life. And there is a further reason for this concurrence of truthfulness and faith. Not only is this being of ours, in its various aspects, the very being by which we are to enter into the truth of the eternal kingdom; but, moreover, truthfulness runs throughout the system of things. Truthfulness is one with faith; it is also at one with God, and with God's creation. All that springs from God is true. When, therefore,

a man speaks the truth, when he bears himself well, when he takes his blame, does his task, is true in himself, and true to his friends; then he is in tune with all things and in tune with God. This is why moral attributes are really more important for discovery than is mere acuteness of the mind, or the acceptance of sound propositions. These last are indeed precious; they are landmarks of past success in the pursuit of truth. But a man must know God directly and for himself; he knows God by a moral submission of his whole being. It is by this conformity that God chooses His own out of the world. The Divine voice rings out through all the world; and those that are in tune with the voice answer to it and thus prove to be His.

See, then, what is our responsibility for faith. See how impossible it is to suggest a reason why a man should trust his judgment of the unseen, trust even his disbelief, when he cannot be sure that he has courage to own the fact which tells against him; when he cannot be sure that he has patience to abide by the friend who wearies him. How sadly we have to acknowledge our weakness, as we see that it is necessary to follow after

truthfulness in order that we may come into the truth, and that the truth may make us free: and this, once more, first because the mind by which we are to know God is the same mind by which we answer the commonest questions, and, secondly, because this law of truth which God seeks in our minds is the same law by which He Himself moves. He is the Truth. It is by His Grace alone that we can become true ourselves and so in tune with Him, and able to vibrate in unison with His manifestations.

Three words must be added of the different ways in which this truth may be manifested and exercised. We must seek truth in ourselves, and truth in the world without, and to live truthfully in the Church.

I. And first, truth within ourselves. The four great forms of life which, in St. John's vision, were about the throne, representing (whatever be their exact nature—Cherubim or Seraphim, or other glorious beings) the perfect response of the created spirit to God, are said to be full of eyes within. They fulfil that Divine requirement which seeketh truth in the inward parts. So we, if we are to be true in the world, true to our

friends, and able to know the truth of God, must seek truth within ourselves. This means not only that we are to examine ourselves to see that we do not tell lies, but that we must find out what it is we really care for. It is ours to refuse to seek things which we do not love; to know what we really need. It is, as Dr. Johnson said in a sentence which is often wrongly accented, "to rid our *minds* of cant."

Speech is not the only thing which may be false, he suggests. A man needs to clear his *mind* to know what he thinks, to think that which really commends itself to him. This is a great first step, to consult our own consciousness; to know what we really think, what we really desire, what really stirs and moves us strongly. To *say* what we think will then be possible.

If we do this we shall find it hard to be consistent. Indeed, real truth and sanity will often require that we shall be content with inconsistency, and hold fast for a time to different parts of truth which we cannot combine. Such sane and truthful inconsistency was Huxley's, when, having long contended that the being of man and the character of

man are results of natural selection, he added to his biological teaching studies which are very valuable in the sphere of ethics and our higher interests. For in these studies he protested that the principal treasures of mankind as such, our ethics, our charity, our social virtues, not only cannot have arisen by natural selection, but depend upon motives which come we know not whence, and continually operate with a superior authority against that one process of natural selection which was held to have governed our origin. It is by inconsistencies like these that men show themselves to be really true, really sane; fearing the charge of inconsistency less than the loss of any part of truth which has come within their grasp.

We, then, in seeking to be true, shall be obliged to confess our ignorance as well as our great weakness, and we shall continually be brought back, therefore, to the feet of God, the Lord of Truth. We shall know our vanity; we shall know how difficult it is even to speak the truth, and we shall cry out to God, "Take not the word of Thy truth utterly out of my mouth; save me, O Lord, Thou God of Truth." There is noth-

ing which will bring us with so much humility, with so conscious a helplessness, to the feet of God and to the throne of mercy, as the resolution to be true and just in all our dealings.

II. To be true in the world, in society, includes, among other things, the choice of real objects. It is untrue to echo cries of slight importance, to use great words of matters which are of small concern. At this moment it is the mode to forget our faults, and even occasionally to forget the war, in order to say and write strong things of certain very badly behaved lads who have recently gained notice in London. Riotous and criminal conduct like theirs is not a new evil. Shall we say it is a new symptom of an old evil? It is not even that. It is an old symptom of a very old evil; and what has happened is only this, that the things which formerly took place in back streets have now for a time emerged into wider and better ones. If you lived in the narrow lanes of the Borough you would know how it is that the big thoroughfares are generally clear of rough doings and hateful sights. That disorder is a thing to suppress is clear. But it would be an instance of insincerity to be indignant at excesses which

annoy and alarm us, while we are practically indifferent to the standing disgraces, far beyond common belief, of our city life.

Again, if we rise very much higher, we find a class of honest people who are publicly concerned about the state of the Church. Here, certainly, is not a thing which is of slight importance. But it is one about which we may well ask whether its importance lies in the matters which are most talked of. Is it really any one's concern to preserve the Reformation Settlement in the sense of preserving the exact frame of things which was thought good three hundred years ago, when London was the size of our Norwich? No one, surely, can think that. We must avoid movements which are concerned with unrealities, or with small affairs. Why should there be a dividing of old friends over questions which in our inmost hearts we know concern us scarcely at all. There are other things attacked which belong to the catholic religion, and no one on the face of the earth can put a stop to these. For these we are to stand firm, and without fear. Indeed I think it is our critics and not we who must fear the disestablishment of the Church. And if we

did not provide a resistance to meet the political assault, I believe, for my part, that many of the attacking party would relax their efforts, because they would be afraid of succeeding. But these discussions are not at all my subject. I have mentioned them by way of warning against unreal indignation in causes which are, by comparison, not important.

When the world is crying out for sacraments; when there is pressing need for more priests, for missionaries, for men to govern Africa; it is no time for earthly political movements about the Church.

III. We have to seek truth in ourselves, to seek truth in the world, to find a real cause and follow it, and, thirdly, to seek truth in the Church, and to be true to the Church.

We cannot say "true to God" as if this were a third and separate thing. All truth is unto God. Truth is nothing less than living unto God and by God Who is real. Truth to ourselves, therefore, is truth to God, but there is also a duty to God in the Church as there is a duty to God in the soul. The truth which must be ours in the Church has two parts. The first is to believe the truth, the second

is to live truly in the Church. Now here we come to very close quarters indeed. Being true in the Church means self-examination; it means knowing the Ten Commandments; it means finding out what a Christian may not do; and, worst of all, it means telling when we have done what a Christian must not do. A Christian who lives a life which is not examined, not tested by the Christian law, is living in a fool's paradise. He is in a false position. But the Christian who is not unexamined, who knows something of himself, and knows—as which of us has not known—that he has broken the Christian law, is, until he has set himself right, not only in a false position, but proceeding on false pretences.

There are many faults against which we strive, but which do not in themselves amount to defections, to treacheries. They do not disqualify us as Christians. But there are some faults which are so grave that, if they were known, they would exclude us from Communion, they would separate us from Christian people. The man who, with such a fault as that upon his conscience, comes to Communion—a fault which, if it were known,

would exclude him—surely comes on false pretences. It is to deliver us from such false pretence, and at the same time to restore us to happy and right Communion, that Confession is in the Church. Confession is not a Popish thing, or a High Church thing, or a mystical, fanciful thing. It is simply an honest thing. It is a way of being honest, of dealing the truth in love; of being delivered from a false position and a miserable state of pretence.

It happens sometimes that discussions upon some duty, which have been complicated by all kinds of large and vague words, are settled or dissipated by the simple reminder that one has made a promise and must keep it. Some such return to first principles is needed in the Church with regard to the Christian law, to sin, and the acknowledgment of it. We must be *true*. We cannot console ourselves with being Protestant, or enlightened, or in any other way superior, if we are not, to start with, true. Certainly we cannot without this truth be Catholics to any good effect. There is much more in confession and absolution than I am now speaking of. There is, indeed, a mystery of loving mercy and grace—a work

of the Holy Ghost. But just now I take great pains to speak of it in one aspect, avoiding all that is high and wonderful. I seek to bring it under the common thought of truth. Here is not a matter of party, not a matter of rubric, or legal obligation. Even the Preface to the Communion Service is not here in point for me, because I am not now relying upon the order of motives to which a legal enactment appeals. I speak of the general necessity of honesty; and I say that the poor dear man who comes to Communion with a bad conscience, who has committed a grave sin—such as, being known to the clergyman or, as the Prayer Book says, "notorious," would lead the clergyman to refuse the sacrament—this man is in a false position; he is a deceiver of himself, and deceives the body to which he belongs. That which if it were "notorious" would exclude, surely does not lose its guilt by being brought secretly into the sanctuary of God.

I am not a Mason, but I suppose that if a Mason breaks a masonic law he tells his Lodge, in order to be reconciled and clear. We Christians are in the Body together. It is perfectly understood that we are to live in

Christ, that we are to keep the laws of God, and by receiving the Holy Communion we are continually to fight against temptation. While we live we have to fight against temptation, and this is common knowledge to us all and mutually understood. But if we sin in some grave manner, if we put ourselves into a situation in which a Christian is not supposed to be, we remain in a false position until we have disclosed that conduct to the body to which we belong. We are to speak the truth one to another; we are to confess our sins one to another; only thus can the life of the body go forward in truth and reality. Such disclosure to the body might be, and has been, by open confession in the congregation; but because we are very weak, and the sin itself makes us weaker, because truth is already hard for us, and because God in His mercy knows that if hard trials are put before us we may go on in wretchedness and never come back to Christ, therefore He makes an easy way; and as He set the Priests to represent the Church, in ruling it, and in offering the Holy Sacrifice, so also He has of His mercy allowed that the priest may for the body,

and as the representative of the body, receive the acknowledgment of faults; and, as the representative of the body, and by the power of Christ which lies in the body, may accept that acknowledgment, and on the acknowledgment he may renew Communion. To speak in this way is to say little of the blessing and sacredness of confession. But here is one part of what it is; not a necessity by the outward ordinance of the Church, but a means of being honest when we have fallen into grave faults. We are weak, and, alas! often forget the grace which would save us. We can never blame or be hard upon each other; but we can encourage each other to honesty. We may have slipped into lies or profanity or graver sins still, through the malice of the devil and the rebellion of our nature, and our most grievous fault. The bitterness of the wrong clings to us, and seems as if it would spoil our lives, our early lives which ought to be so full of strength and joy and hope. It is not God's will that any should go on in unhappiness and stained by any sin. And the answer to our secret grief is this;—that the very thing we dread most, which is yet so plainly neces-

sary on grounds of mere honesty, is also that which will cure us; it is the thing which brings us again to Christ, which opens our souls to the Precious Blood, and allows the power of God to run strong within us once more, and so delivers us from our next temptation. Here, then, is no fancy, no mediæval revival, no strange thing, no wicked conspiracy against freedom; here is nothing of which we are ashamed. It is, besides all its other blessings, the great protection against further sins. For it is the first fall into any sin which makes us weak enough for the second, and the second which makes us weaker still for the temptation which follows it; and so the series of lies or whatever other misery is ours becomes closer and more swift, the sins overcoming more easily the resistance which is weakened by progressive loss of grace. But if we open our hearts, if we take counsel, if we tell the Church, and call the aid of our brethren, then we are no longer in a false position, but in truth before God. Then is the devil confronted by more than the strength of one. Then, moreover, the very pain we dreaded becomes the means of healing, the opportunity for pardon; and true and fruitful Communions begin again, and quite

cut through the dreadful series of sin ; and good habit revives quickly, for the man who has spoken the truth is already more than half delivered from habit, as he is wholly from old guilt. He has already, by God's grace, become almost a hero in that one costly effort, which gave him the assurance of God's love, even as it did to David. "While I held my tongue my bones consumed away through my daily complaining ; but when I said my foot hath slipped, Thy mercy, O Lord, held me up." David "said" it to God's servant. "David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord. And Nathan said unto David, The Lord also hath put away thy sin." And so, to finish—for our time is spent—let us include in our thoughts of truth the words of St. John about truth and sin : "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us : but, if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." The wholly secret confession of our hearts to God is not fruitless ; God forbid ! But as we come to see that the Church is a real and holy body, the blessed company of all faithful people ; as we see how dear it is, and how in

it we are knit together in God's life, there will grow in us a desire of clearness of intercourse in that body, in that blessed communion. We shall see there an opportunity and a call to honesty, and in this call accepted a way of abundant pardon and restoration. In Jerusalem is a fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness. No ! the secret trials, the secret prayers, are not fruitless, indeed. They bring us to the grace to do the braver, harder thing by which we are restored into the full honesty and happiness of dear sons.

IV

THE DAILY JUDGMENT

"The multitude therefore answered Him, We have heard out of the law that the Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man? Jesus therefore said unto them, Yet a little while is the light among you. Walk while ye have the light, that darkness overtake you not: and he that walketh in the darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have the light, believe on the light, that ye may become sons of light."—ST. JOHN xii. 34–36.

IF we dare to consider with reverence the state of our Divine Saviour's human consciousness when He was on earth, surrounded by ignorance and opposition, beset with the mocking folly and the still more foolish wisdom of the world, we can hardly forbear picturing it as a state of difficult reserve. His holy consciousness was full of light and joy, communicated even to His sacred creaturely nature by the Father, while He moved among the people in their opposition and ignorance and suffered their reproofs as if

in a silence full of knowledge. If we dare to entertain for a moment such a thought of His sacred reserve, and follow with this thought the sacred record of the Gospel, we shall see two conspicuous features in the method of our Lord's dealing with the hostility or with the criticism of the world.

The first characteristic is not so universal, nor of such vital importance as the second. It is His employment of quite small words and familiar images to express the greatest facts and the most momentous differences of doctrine. Our own practice does not prepare us for this method. We are accustomed to use very large words for small events. When a man makes a journey into a distant county, spends some money upon printed appeals, and speaks in several places for several days in the week, we call the event a campaign. We use large words for little things. It is the manner of Christ to use very small words for great things. When He would impress upon His hearers the awful truths concerning the last division of our race; when He gives His warnings of the last testing and the fixed destiny of man, His images are drawn from the

common spectacle of any market-town on market-day—a shepherd dividing his sheep from the goats. So in the solemn warning which He offers to a people ready to demand from Him an account of Himself, He uses small words; He speaks of the common prudence of little journeys, of the danger of walking in a country-place without a lantern after dark. "Make your journey," He says, "take care to finish your walk while you have light, because the man who goes about after dark does not know where he may go to." There is the ditch, and the treacherous ground; there are the stones that wound, the pit that must be skirted, the trap for wayfarers who err, the robbers in their lurking-place. The day, then, is for journeys; make your journey while still there is light for you. Here are slight words pointing to the gravest matters, words of everyday prudence fit to make men wise unto salvation. And is it not the fact that in this very slightness of phrase our Lord, in His eternal wisdom, and in His feeling for our infirmities, seeks a means to surprise our narrow minds into thoughts of the awful majesty of His judgments? There is indeed something awakening, something

terrifying, in this irony of the Saviour, in His rejection of emphasis, and employment of homely words. His truth needs no sounding phrase to lend it wings; His terror, the "terror of the Lord," needs no fierce threatenings to make it awful. Rather, the open heart is the more readily caught with fear, when we hear this common warning, referring to the common experience of a walk by night in uncertain lanes or dangerous streets, and when we know that the warning is applied to our souls and their vital adventure, and when, moreover, we know that the light of which He speaks is Himself, the Light of the World, the Light into which we come by faith, according to His word, "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on Me should not abide in darkness."

That is the first of the characteristics which to-day we choose for reflection; and the second is the manner in which our Blessed Lord, by apparently slight means and words of small scale, often completely reverses the mental situation He deals with, and causes the debate to turn round quite a new centre. In this place, for example, He gives the people no direct answer to their question, no satis-

faction in their doubt. Instead of this, by a simple turn, by a short silence probably, and then by this homely image, He leads their thoughts to turn about a fresh pivot. They were for judging Him; their demand was that He should explain Himself to them upon the basis of their understanding of the Scriptures. See how characteristic of our modern religious debates is the situation which St. John describes. The passage we are studying follows the utterance of the most generous promise of the gospel. The Son of Man must be lifted up, and will thus draw all men to Himself. It is the promise of the saving fact of which St. Peter says, "Christ also suffered for us, who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we being dead to sins should live unto righteousness." And before the Saviour's promise came the great supernatural manifestation, the voice of the Father from His unseen throne in answer to the cry, "Father, glorify Thy name." There is the Divine word from heaven, "I have both glorified it, and will glorify Thee again," the voice which came for the world's sake, and which some who heard it explained as thunder.

First, then, the heavenly manifestation, the wonder; and then the offer and the promise of the revealed Saviour's personal love, and supreme sacrifice as God and Man. "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Myself." First, there is the august revelation from heaven, and then the supreme promise of a Redeemer's love. But after the foundation in Divine operation, and the consequence in love at once human and Divine, comes the outburst of criticism pretending to be theological. "The multitude answered Him, We have heard out of the law that the Christ abideth for ever, and how sayest Thou, The Son of man must be lifted up?" Here, indeed, were considerations justly in point. A man has offered to die for them; God has borne witness from heaven to His only-begotten Son. And at such a moment they remember half-understood texts heard in the synagogue. They have heard out of the law. They know their Bibles, just as, in our day, we know ours.

"We have heard out of the law that the Christ abideth for ever; and how sayest Thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man?" They attempt to

become judges, to try the divinely attested Saviour ; they will measure the claims and offer of His love by their half-knowledge of sacred texts.

That was the situation. Now see how our Lord turns it. He suggests to them, ever so gently, and yet so firmly, that it is not indeed He Who is judged of them, but they who are on their trial before Him. He says in effect that their nearest concern is not to condemn His words, to convict Him of ignorance or mistake, or to draw from Him, for His own sake, the satisfaction of their doubts. In true fact it is *their* fortune which is at stake, and their interest to make the most of a passing opportunity. The light which they judge is a light for their guidance, and for guidance out of a perilous situation. Yet a little while longer the light is among them, in the midst of them, and their concern is to walk by it ; not, that is, to compare His claim and promise with their half-memories of unlearnt Scriptures, but to use His teaching to proceed on their way, to walk while they have the light, lest the darkness overtake them, for when the light has once gone a man may not tell to what end he goeth.

Thus the Lord, for those who can hear, reverses the position. He came into the world, not in order to judge it, but still for judgment; to be by the mere action of men their test. And still, though He cometh not to judge and condemn by His mouth, He is in the world "for judgment"; by His presence we are disclosed in our true state; and by our attitude towards Him and thought of Him, not only is our present condition manifested, but also our state and position in the universe become determined. This position is more than made known, it is altered and it is fixed by the movement of our minds concerning Christ, and by our judgment of Him. What think ye of Christ? This is the question of really vital importance; of vital importance, not for Him but for us.

Jesus Christ has come into the world, and is in the world a light, and the real truth is not that He is waiting for the world's favourable verdict, although this is the way in which the case presents itself to the public; but, in fact, the public and the nations, the Churches and the individuals, stand before the Lord and are being judged, although

not by His will or voice. A day is coming when He will declare His judgment, but now, "If a man hear My sayings and keep them not, I judge him not, for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world." At the end, the rejected Word, "the same shall judge a man at the last day." Now He is silent, and we think that we judge Him; but in truth we are judging ourselves by our attitude towards Him. The same diversity between the real and the apparent judicial situation may be seen constantly in common life.

A country servant cannot imagine that Sir Frederick Roberts is a general—I am thinking of a real incident in the days of his Afghan campaign—he "is not big enough." The good servant is not adjudging our hero his place in the roll of great commanders, but is indicating the extent of the servant's knowledge of what constitutes a general.

The world is fixedly under the impression that Christ is up for trial before it, and so it puts on its great air and the robes; and the Church, the Holy Gospel, and the eternal mysteries of God are set up for judgment

before the passing thoughts of men, which scarcely for twenty years maintain unchanged their scope and direction. Men were told in the seventies that the cause of Christianity and the Church was at last too plainly a lost cause, condemned by the certainties of science. At a later time a distinguished teacher of science used often to say, "If there is anything to be said for Christianity —and I understand some hold by it, although they have been trained in comparative anatomy—if there is anything to be said for Christianity, especially if it can be said by a student who has known our discipline, it had better be said now. What can be said should be said without delay, for very soon it may be too late." A good many years have gone by since this was said with all gravity, with a deep feeling of responsibility, with the strong impression that the young man who had gone through his course of dissection should produce at once any reason he could still find for being a Christian. It was the sincere thought of many clear-headed men that now, at last, Christianity must be given up by the reasonable; that the strong fixed impressions of many souls during all

these nineteen hundred years must go; that it was Christ the Lord and His Holy Church and eternal truth which were on trial, and the world, with its passing fashions of thought, the judge.

In our courts of law you may occasionally see a suggestion of the same ambiguity. A great expert is giving evidence in some case, say of electrical distribution, and his knowledge is so far in advance of that of judge or counsel, and his character and responsibility so weighty, that for the hour it seems as if the court's centre of gravity were changed, and the witness-box become the seat of judgment. And the law of the case (let us suppose) being clear, it is the statement of the great witness—a witness like Bramwell—uttered in answer to the minimum of skilful questioning, which becomes substantially the judgment in the suit, and fixes the destination of great sums of money.

Such slight and passing things may serve to suggest the great trial of all, in which Christ stood in the prisoner's place, but it was the priests and Pilate who were on trial before the Truth. "Every one that is of the truth heareth My voice." There was even at that

last hour the note of warning for those who would hear; and in the event of to-night's text, the same warning is already suggested. Were there not some standing by to whom the dread suspicion came: Is it this man, after all, who judges us; can it be that our view of Him matters not at all to Him, but is of the last concern to us? Think of this possible reversal of the very direction of judgment when you hear debates about the truth of our Lord. You must, indeed, enter into them with the weapons of reason, you must consider them according to your powers of understanding; but remember that there is always at least the possibility—more than the possibility—that *that* which has held the conscience and illuminated the mind for so many generations of men is the fixed point, the pivot of thought round which the debate turns, and by their relations to which the different systems of human thought will be found, and even constituted, true or false.

The Lord is in the world, and as we believe in Him, and trust in Him, obey Him, follow Him, and conform to Him—yes, as we think of Him and judge Him—so our state is determined. It is not only manifested to Him

and to angels, but it is in real substantial verity constituted and fixed in the nature of things; our place in the universe becomes determined by the relation of our minds, of our contentment, and of our love towards the Lord and Saviour Who comes to offer Himself to be our bread. We who reject Him reject our own life. God is always here "for judgment," though He desires to save. And so even when we judge each other, it is still God, it is still Jesus Who decides. In South Africa the Boers are not on their trial before this nation, nor England before the Boers. In fact both they and we alike stand before God for His judgment and for His decision, whether there be sincerity in us, generosity, wisdom, pity, the power of government, the forces for peace. Or, again, when lately our doctors of the English Church exchanged views with some of the Church of Rome, our sacred orders were not in fact on trial before that Church, nor the Vatican before ours, but these two bodies of poor Christian people were standing truly side by side before the all-seeing eye of God, and the question which was set for decision was not, indeed,

whether we have the grace of order, nor whether Italian clergymen can appreciate an historical argument, but whether this little generation of catholic Christians in Rome and England had yet obtained by faith and love, by penance and hard service, by dutifulness and many prayers, enough grace for mutual understanding. It proved that we had not; but judgment went not against the one side or the other alone. The Lord visited us and found us together unmeet for fulness of peace and truth. May He come again and try us once more, and in the interval, by His preventing grace, may we gain love, and honesty, and courage sufficient to destroy that day one of the barriers which stand between us.

So it is always God and the Lord Jesus Christ Who judge, and our ways and thoughts which are judged. It may be reserved for us to hear that some further generalisation of physical knowledge has been reached, and that once more a man must be dishonest who pretends to be a Christian. We may be told again, as our fathers were told in 1860, that a great naturalist and wise man has spent full three months in converting

a supremely clever one to his point of view, and that forthwith it is almost intolerable that the old Church should continue to rule and to say the creeds, and that bishops should still be shepherding God's flock.

It may well be that the same grave rebukes, the same brilliant scorn, will fall upon you in middle life as men had to bear forty and thirty and twenty years ago, who were not always able to perceive all the implications of the new teaching, and were yet unwilling to abandon the ways which had been proved for many generations. If such a day comes, remember, if you will, that the belief which we hold is based upon informations which lie much deeper in the nature of things than do the ultimate generalisations of physical knowledge—informations both broader and more penetrating, at once extending to wider realms of evidence, and clinging to us with a nearer intimacy of experience.

We must pray and hope that the new advances, when they come, may be no more adverse to the Christian faith than are the advances we already recognise. With regard to these we have no sound reason for supposing that they are in conflict with the truths

of revelation. It would indeed be sad to think that so great an amount of research and so diligent a use of reason had led science into collision with the deepest and most indestructible convictions of the human mind. We are to hope better things than that for science and philosophy : a more fruitful result than a conflict with knowledge which once grasped can never be abandoned. It is for our independent inquiry, for the movement of our human speculation, that we have to be anxious, and not for Christ and His word. And since this is so, since that which rejects Christ is judged by its own act; therefore, it is the duty of us who belong to Him to be careful, watchful, considerate ; to see that by our action we do not prejudice the case of the world, do not make it harder for any to choose Christ ; to see that we pass no hasty judgment ourselves ; to walk by truth and conviction indeed, to say nothing we do not know, and to mark the limits of our understanding. Yet, on the other hand, while certain things are obscure, we must not allow those things that we have to be shaken. In times of doubt and of difficulty, and especially difficulties which belong to our moral life, our

first duty is to maintain a fast grip upon the faith in Jesus Christ, and to let our judgment move in accordance with that. For indeed (and it is by far the most important part of the truth we are considering) we are ourselves every day set for judgment before Him; and it depends upon the degree in which our souls are kept clear, our courage maintained, our lips sacred to the truth,[1] our hearts secured for love through purity and kindness—on all this now depends our standing in the far-off day. That last judgment turns on the things which are done day by day now, while we make our choice concerning Jesus Christ.

This great fact is represented to us by the image of the Good Shepherd and the sheep. Christ, the Good Shepherd, the Shepherd who layeth down His life for the sheep, also calleth His own sheep by name, and His sheep know Him, and they follow Him. You remember, of course, out of Bishop Westcott, the true meaning of that figure. The sheep are mingled in the great common pen, which is the world; not the fold of the Church, whither our Lord will lead us at last, but the

[1] To the priest it is said, "Os Evangelio consecrasti," and it is a word for every Christian.

great pen of the world. We are to think of some common enclosure, into which the sheep of many shepherds are driven to rest for the night; and then of the shepherd standing at the door of the high stone wall, and calling his sheep by name, that he may lead them forth to his pasture. And this is the important point: the sheep are distinguished and claimed by their following of the voice. There are two shepherds standing at the door of the pen, and one of them is in debate with the other. One is leading away the sheep he claims, and the other protests, "These are *my* sheep; you are leading away my sheep." The first may safely answer, "Call them, and if they are your sheep they will know your voice and come to you. I called, and these are the sheep that came; these, therefore, are the sheep that are mine. If they are yours, call them and they will follow, for sheep know not the voice of strangers."

The test of ownership is the coming of the sheep; the voice is a sufficient divider; and the sorting of the flock proceeds by sending the familiar call across the mixed collection of creatures waiting to be owned. That is the image, and the meaning is plain. We

are not to draw from it the sad thought that some are *not* finally our Lord's sheep. It is the positive truth we are to learn. We are meant to understand that His sheep are manifested, and indeed made His—though none is by nature the property of any other than Christ—by their obedience to His voice. As the Shepherd's voice rings through the crowd, His own sheep are parcelled out from the rest; one by one they hear the familiar voice and walk towards it; they come to His feet and gladly follow Him, as He leads them to their own pastures, to a safe fold, and an eternal home.

In such a place as this the voice of Jesus sounds continually. Here is a great band of souls full of strength and of glorious possibilities. But there are some among these who choose another set of sad possibilities, and who develope in a way contrary to God's will. Everything turns upon our listening for the voice of the Saviour, Who is the man that every one of us must wish to be. His voice really goes out in all claims of duty, in the ordinary framing and discipline of our life; the call is heard in sports and all manly associations; in the noble studies which are

your principal business; in all the various directions in which curiosity may be satisfied; in social life and the love of our fellows, as well as in the sounding of the Gospel, in the offer of the Holy Sacraments, and in another way of which I would gladly speak at greater length than is possible to-night—in the call to service, in the invitation to give ourselves to Him in missionary work, in the holy ministry of the altar, in the care of the sick, in every true labour for the world.

In all these ways the voice of our Divine Saviour sounds out over a place like this as over a most dear quarter of the great enclosure, a place where His own are hidden, and all might be His; for although He speaks of sheep and goats, yet there are none who are fixed in a nature contrary to His service, or foreign to His likeness. But the real truth is, in each of us there is a mass of possibilities, a huge collection of impulses, of potentialities, so various that all of them cannot possibly be expressed or fulfilled in the narrow stage of one individual life. And so, by the very richness of our organisation, by the manifold strength that is in us, we are given the opportunity, and indeed the necessity, of choice;

we may choose not only what we shall do, but in some measure what we shall be.

This diverse possibility seems to follow from the most probable teaching of biological science. In popular thought, in novels and plays, the conception of a life fixed by hereditary equipments is very prominent. There is the strain of good and the strain of bad, and if the strain of good is in us, then good we shall be; and if the strain of bad is in us, then we shall be, however hard we strive, inevitably bad. And if the strain is mixed, as every strain is, then character will follow a course which, if we had the data, might be predicted by the laws (almost) of arithmetic.

In this line of popular thought there is an omission of the *excess*, if I may call it so, of hereditary tendencies. According to our latest and most probable teaching, it seems inevitable that in the root of the natural constitution there should be an excess of potencies, so that it is mathematically impossible for all the capabilities present to find their expression within the limits of a single individual life. So for free-will, for education and discipline, we have not to plead for room contrary to reason, but we are obliged on grounds of

science to suppose that there is room for choice, if only there is an agent to make the choice.

If you give yourself up to the Lord He will grant you in return the power and the light to choose between the good life and the bad. Nay, you may throw yourself in spirit before Him, and say, "Look upon me, Lord, in all my diverse possibilities, in all my contradictory impulses, now pure and now impure, now prepared to love, and now full of scorn and bitterness, and choose Thou in me that which is Thine own; draw out in me, accomplish, realise, and manifest that part which pleases Thee, and pour into me that which I have not by natural descent; bring forth to-day the heavenly life which was planted in me in my baptism; grant me such fresh floods of the Holy Ghost that it may be as if I were regenerated afresh, that I may be as one now born anew and from above." When a man thus cries out to Him, Christ answers with His Holy Spirit and draws the penitent on to possibilities which he supposed impossible, so that he becomes in Christ what he despaired of being—a man of love, and fidelity, and generous service.

Even to-night we are gathered as a little

group of His sheep. The voice of Jesus, even now as I utter His sacred name without tones of persuasion, yet calls to us; and we are not judged if we think the sermon dull. But we are judged if we do not love Jesus Christ; we are judged if His name means nothing to us; we are judged if the thought of truth does not stir us, if the longing of purity does not kindle us, if we do not desire to know what God would have us to do. If there is not the impulse after obedience and the desire for sacrifice, then let us pray for these, that we may not be judged when the Good Shepherd utters the last call for His sheep.

What shall we think of our state if, when He calls, we answer not? Are we waiting for some other voice? Is there another voice which can charm us? Has Christ any real rival except the one great enemy? It is not true honour, or knowledge, or service which draws us from Him. Is there a man who is more useful because he has departed from Christ? Indeed there is but one rival voice to His, the one alluring, hateful, sweet, accursed call to sin, the voice of Satan. And the enemy desires to draw us from

Christ by the warm invitations of pleasure in order that, having led us, as in some dream, through the bright halls of self-pleasing, he may abandon us, when the time comes for final judgment, when the light which now shineth in us must be taken away from us, when we must walk in the darkness, in wild places or on fatal paths, still far from the home which in the time of light we might have reached.

Listen not to that treacherous call. If we hear not the voice of Jesus calling to us, then the only other voice which claims us, which invites us and holds us captive, is the voice of that enemy the devil, by whose wickedness and guile the Lord of Glory was nailed upon the Cross for us, that we might receive the Holy Spirit, and grace by which to know the Saviour's voice, and hear it and follow Him, and be His now and for ever.

V

VOCATION

"Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, which He promised afore by His prophets in the Holy Scriptures." —ROMANS i. 1, 2.

LAST week we considered the voice of our Lord Jesus Christ as it calls us to salvation; to-night I hope to speak of the calling or vocation of the same voice as it is an invitation to service. For the same mercy which calls us to the Church, the state of salvation, also calls each Christian to a special state within the Church, and to a special service to be rendered therein to his brethren. We will consider the fact of supernatural and special vocation in this sense, under four divisions.

First, the reality and distinctness and blessedness of vocation, and its purposes in the divine government; secondly, the means of coming to a practical knowledge of our vocation; thirdly, the dangers which beset

the doctrine of vocation; and, fourthly, the safeguards which accompany the doctrine of vocation.

There are, let me say in explanation, no dangers in vocation itself; but there are dangers—perhaps not common, but very important — which beset the *doctrine* of vocation, and therefore we will save time, if possible, for a few words upon those dangers and upon the safeguards which they call for. These four divisions, then, may guide our thoughts; and the inquiry, as a whole, we undertake under a sense of the sorrows of our brethren, with the thought of the evil that is in the world, and the need of service in the world.

The world's need may be thought of as our motive for service, as God's occasion for vocation. So of Cyrus it is written: "Thus saith the Lord to His anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden. . . . For Jacob My servant's sake, and Israel Mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name; I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known Me."[1] And so also St. Paul heard the voice of God for the sake

[1] Isaiah xlv. 1, 4.

of his brethren, and, being called to salvation in Jesus Christ, found himself also to be "a servant of Jesus Christ according to the will of God the Father; called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, which He had promised afore by His prophets in the Holy Scriptures."

In that word we see our first point—the reality of Holy Vocation as a thing distinct from the other forces of God's government. In the opening sentence of that epistle which has been called St. Paul's philosophy of history, the apostle brings his particular calling into relation and contrast with God's ancient promise. God had declared His purpose of mercy, "before," "by the prophets," but there remained still the need to publish and carry forth that gospel which had long ago been foretold in sacred Scriptures. On the one hand, we see the public government of God and the known documents of His mercy; and, on the other hand, the secret monition of God, separating the chosen vessel for the service of that gospel which He has already declared by the inspired utterance of His holy prophets.

Special separate vocation, therefore, by in-

ward monition or miraculous indication, is distinct from the general government of the Church. It is distinct, besides, from certain other personal realities, which are also blessings of God and means of guidance to the fulfilment of His purpose—I mean the character of personal capacity, and the pressure of circumstance upon the individual life. I think it may be said that we fail to see clearly the truth and joy of vocation, because we are hasty in identifying it with these other realities which also come from God. It may be that it is one of the mental characteristics of our age to attempt the identification of things which are practically distinct—to take over, for example, the terms of one art into the employment of another. We scarcely describe musical achievements now except in terms which belong to the plastic arts, or to the colours and forms of nature. In theology we are so eager to reduce a given truth to the terms of some other truth, that it has been said with, at any rate, an approach to discretion, that there are preachers in whose mouths the creed has only one article. So it may be in this matter of vocation. We are so much accustomed to the word "voca-

tion" as meaning a profession, a person's place in life, quite apart from any thought of the way that place is fixed, that we readily accept the statement that vocation is to be determined by considering natural fitness, by taking the advice of friends, and by looking round to see where work is most urgently needed, or even where it will be most adequately rewarded.

Now, excepting the last, all these considerations are good, but they will not, either singly or together, lead us to distinguish the supernatural and special gift of vocation, which is something different from either faculty or opportunity. Fitness is indeed a gift of God, and an indication of His holy will; but it is an indication which is other and less authoritative than is that inward vocation which He gives, and sometimes very clearly, in addition to the indication of fitness. Fitness cannot be for us a *decisive* guide—that is, fitness as we ourselves estimate it. For true security we must look higher, and be guided by the monitions of the spoken voice of God; a guidance which is at once more practical and much more sacred than is the guidance of a human estimate of natural capacity or acquirement.

True fitness, if we could but know it, we must reverence, and we must never disparage the guidance of fitness as it is discerned by wise men. But precisely because that fitness is complementary to vocation and is necessary to the fulfilment of any vocation, therefore it is also distinct and even different from vocation itself. And it is precisely the vocation which runs counter to natural fitness which most requires and which most rewards recognition. The concomitance of vocation with fitness is in less danger of being overlooked when it occurs, and we cannot therefore too earnestly insist that God in His goodness sometimes sends out His voice with commands which seem to contradict fitness, as we judge it, and only after He has called the man out for service bestows upon him the gifts which are necessary for the accomplishment of an accepted command. Again, in other cases there are great gifts and great aptitudes which appear to be altogether laid aside, as in the case of Keith-Falconer in your own University, who resigned what seemed to be the proper task of his life in this place and devoted himself instead to missionary work. This life was not wasted, but

as even *we* can see, used to the uttermost by the very losing of it; so that it is an instance from which we may pass to the great case of St. Paul himself, who if he had followed the indication of his natural gifts must entirely have declined the invitation of Jesus Christ. For when he was "not disobedient to the heavenly vision," he turned his back upon the clear dictates of fitness, of faculties, and of training, and gave himself up instead to a voice calling him to a state which seemed certain to be a state of fruitless solitude and of alienation from the great stream of his nation's life.

And further, vocation is something different from the guidance of circumstances. Circumstances also are holy; to the believer they, like inward fitness, indicate the will of God and serve the purposes of grace. When God would save His chosen people in Egypt, "He sent a man before them, even Joseph whom they sold to be a bond-servant." The type of the Saviour was "sent," not merely by means of circumstances such as we call indifferent, but even by means of a crime, and the jealous hatred of his brethren. Their crime was the means by which God sent Joseph to the place

where He wished him to be. "God sent me," he said, "before you to preserve life." But the crime by which Joseph was sold into captivity was not his vocation.

No; vocation is a real call of God heard within the heart. It comes in varying degrees of clearness to different men, but it is in itself the clear voice of God sounding across circumstances, piercing through fitness and unfitness, penetrating comfortable homes; dragging a man out from a promising career, demanding the sacrifice of his chosen place of work, of his prospect of distinction, of what seem his opportunities for good; disparaging the claims of health or even of life, and forcing him, as it were, even as St. Paul was forced, to accept a special line which is contrary to all advice, but which has its own blessing because it is accepted according to that highest of all kinds of government, the government which is maintained by the spoken word and the obedient heart. This special calling is indeed a part of the holy calling of our salvation; part of the "high calling of God in Christ Jesus." It is enclosed in the substance of our eternal choice of God; and even as by that movement of the Spirit, the man chooses Christ to be his

Saviour, so by the impulse of the same Spirit he chooses the service of the poor, or of the rich, or of the heathen, or of the outcast. He can give no other account of his life but this; that it is morally bound up with that gain of Christ for which he counts all things but loss. The ordinary life of a comfortable and properly equipped clergyman or of a learned professor, is as fully a life of vocation when it is yielded to God, and exercised as part of a man's adherence to Christ, as is the hardest and the most obscure lot, or that high token of God's tender love—the vocation to the life of the evangelical counsels.

To begin with, then, we believe in the *reality* of vocation; we believe that the special work of life is chosen as something more even than a corollary of faith, as something which is bound up, in and in, with the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, the calling to the heavenly life itself, to virtue and salvation. So blessed is this connection that when a man accepts his vocation to a special state or to a special service, he not only obeys the monitions of faith, and does honour to his state as a Christian by trusting to the Holy Ghost, instead of trusting merely to

the advice of earthly prudence—not only is his action an acknowledgment and proof of faith, but it comes to be itself a consolidation of faith. The man grows daily surer of his Christian state and of the general treasures of the Gospel, as he presses on to apprehend that for which he was apprehended of Christ, to seize the task or the state for which Christ, even before his conversion, selected the man whom by His very selection He would save. Most real, then, is the inward supernatural vocation which draws men from the comfortable pastures of their class, and brings them into places which seem desolate, and bids them perhaps, at the first, to turn away from thoughts of aptitude and from the advice of good men, brings them into strange countries, tears them from their homes and their kindred, takes them to other parts of the earth, as Abraham was taken from Chaldea into the country of the Canaanites, there to be a wanderer. All this holy vocation may do, although afterwards the subject of it may find himself again in homely pastures, and use the gifts of nature in the new strength of spiritual obedience.

Such is vocation, and surely we shall desire

to receive some high and difficult task when we think of the bitter and tragical state of the world. If you forget how dark that world is in which we move, I suggest to you a simple reminder. When next you go to London, walk from the station to your home or your inn; get out, to be quite precise, on coming from Liverpool Street, at Farringdon Street, and walk on a Saturday through a few streets westward of that point; or explore the Borough of Southwark, between Blackfriars Bridge and London Bridge; or penetrate some of the obscurer streets of Westminster; and you will see enough to make any man pause, as he reflects that God watches over all lives and frames them according to His will. "Every man's life a plan of God," is the title of an eloquent sermon of Horace Bushnell's. Every man's life a plan of God! and what then is the plan of *these* lives? What of these women of thirty, who are old and seamed with care? What of these men with faces, hardly by their own fault, disfigured by the marks of vice or hard living? What of these little children growing up without the light of home, without instruction, without hope? It is not the

roughness of these lives or their bareness which need grieve us. Blessed are the poor, the heavy burdened, the labouring lives. Nor will it be even the sight of sin which most shocks our sinful eyes. It is the apparent absence of all purpose which is so sad and so perplexing. These lives seem, as it were, cast out to waste like spoilt goods, and yet they are just new. These men of fifty whom you see, seamed and bruised, fit for no proper employment, are really under thirty; and yet at an age when some men are still promising, and have not shown their quality, these men have fired their shot and missed. It is the purposelessness of the life, the absence of respect for the life, the conviction that there is no place for it, no object in saving or instructing it, which is the bitterest and saddest thing. Sin is always a bitter tragedy and awful, but there is a blank despondency upon the faces of some of our dear countrymen, which is in some respects even sadder than the mark of rebellion which may also be traced there. So few figures, so few faces, as Dean Church said, meet you on the way down Fleet Street, which have arrived anywhere near the natural limit of develop-

ment, have attained anything like the beauty or the significance or the nobility which was in them. Even natural fineness is an indication of man's end, and there is some good to be found in the luxurious and stately form of life. It is a witness to the nobility of man; it is a claim for room for him. Even the great country-house, with its broad park and guarded lawns, with its cool chambers and reverential service, though it has in it too often the blemish of selfishness, is, as if by a blind instinct, bearing its witness and making an assertion of the natural dignity of man. This, it seems to say, is what all men need and claim; thus it is that all men should be clad and lodged. The very plea of necessity which is offered in defence of luxuries implies the assertion—an assertion which needs large reserves—that all men should have room to move, to look about them, and time to think and know themselves. You may look out, then, upon this London of ours, and see this waste of life—I do not say this poverty and hardship, for poverty and hardship are no evil to those who bear them, and there are very many among the poorest of the poor, especially in the East End of London,

who are living noble and sufficient lives. Your hearts will not only be stirred as you see poverty and rough fare, and immense difficulties endured with cheerful patience, but they will be pierced by the horrible waste and purposeless pouring out of humanity, in which men and women seem to lose the very sense of the boundaries of personality, so that life becomes a struggle in a dim mass of undistinguished misfortune.

There is the task; and there never was a time when men were so wanted to attack it. Everywhere is the same cry: "Where are the men?" We have numbers, indeed; numbers in the Bar, or in Parliamentary life, or in business; numbers everywhere, excepting only in the sacred ministry of the Gospel; but we have no abundance of faculty, of initiative; we do not see the men upon whom we may lay responsibility; we do not hear the voices which should lead us and encourage. We still look in vain for the politician who will take up, thoroughly and heartily, the cause of the rehousing of the poor. The real difficulty is not a difficulty to find money. I observe, and with satisfaction, that again the old cry is raised

against missions to the heathen as if they were opposed to the interests of our home population. I read of a man who threatens that he will always leave his church when the collection there is for foreign missions, because he feels so strongly the needs of our home heathen. I am glad that the opposition to missions makes itself heard again, because, in this year of many meetings, our cause seemed to lie in grave danger of perishing of unanimity. But we ought to know that the cause of the poor of London is not in any conflict with the cause of missions, and would be no better off if every missionary were recalled to England. The total sums spent on missions would be lost in face of the problems of England. You might throw it after the other thousands which have been thrown away, and it would make no perceptible difference. The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel has spent in Africa in fifty years £800,000. It is a noble sum, and has made possible a great work. But what would £800,000 do in London in fifty years? We have to spend ten times that in a single year if we are to do our duty presently in pulling down whole

quarters and rebuilding them. Already our Education bill goes far beyond that sum. No! It is not the support of the foreign missions which diverts supplies from the cause of the English poor. That home cause cries out for greater and especially for more persevering help. Our School and College missions begin to miss something of the personal encouragement with which they began their work. But we do not hear that the later generations of our school-fellows are drawn off from Southwark or from Poplar to the support of African missions. Nor, again, is it money, so easily transferred, which is chiefly needed either at home or abroad, but men prepared to devote mind and heart to the poorer brother; and the total of home and foreign missionaries will not be increased by closing one of the two chief approaches by which men enter on the path of evangelical service.

In the presence of our suffering populations, the man who can observe and love will ask himself, What plan of God can there be for these lives? And how can I help them to reach some real accomplishment? To desire to help is inevitable. But *how?* The best road to an answer

is to make something, by God's grace to make the *best*, of your own life. If this be in a real sense attempted, God will use you for the rescue of your brethren. And if we further ask, *How* can I make the best of myself, the reply must be, By listening for, and obeying the call of God. This call gives all that genius gives, and very far more. In place of the rare and fallible initiative of man, it communicates the initiative of God. To the man who lives by it, God speaks as He spoke to Cyrus: "For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name; I have surnamed thee. . . . I will gird thee." Even as the Lord said to Simon: "Thou art Simon; thou shalt be called Peter;" so He will surname us; He will raise each listening soul out of his natural weakness, and bring him to a supernatural dignity and a supernatural effectiveness. No man shall in vain decline the world's baits and accept Jesus as his sole inheritance. The Eternal shall, in response, accept his burnt sacrifice, and fulfil all the mind of the man who is ready to be offered—who has set his gift upon the altar, and cried, The God Who by

fire shall answer, He is my God. To such an offering there shall not be wanting a Divine response, the accepting revelation of the fire from heaven.

In the reality of vocation there lies a use of special advantage for God's Kingdom; for in vocation God has a machinery by which He substantially alters the moral course of the world. It is in part for this reason that God does not always choose men according to natural fitness. A society in which fitness ruled position would lack movement; just as an arrangement in which gravitation has accomplished its work possesses no potential. If you set all the rising men at the top and all the heavy men at the bottom, the community stands still. It is obvious that the statement has its limits, but it has also its application. Put the clock weights at the bottom, and the clock will stop. So if you put all the men of vigour in the high places, and all the men of quiet and stationary spirit on the pavement of the Church, the whole scheme is beautiful, but it does not move. Each weight has fallen into its slot, each plume has been lifted to its proper crest, and there you have the model of a Church, but not a working model. What

we need is to find the strong men, the explosive men, the men of vigour sometimes at the bottom, for there they may make the arrangement stir. Set the learned men sometimes among the poor, that by their skilful advocacy the Eternal Gospel may penetrate to dull or untaught minds; and there will be no great harm done if sometimes in consequence the unlearned and rough preachers are stationed in quarters where they shock the ears of the polite with unschooled expressions of the truth as it is in Jesus. To put the clever always with the clever, so that the clever might always hear what they expect; to put the stupid always with the stupid, so that the blind might lead the blind, this would make all Church life persist in sameness, so that we should fail even more than now we fail to attack the moral difficulties of our time.

The Church is meant for something else than a smooth course. The Church is meant, among other tasks, for the discipline of society, for the re-housing of the poor, for grappling with vice, for causing the country to move according to the will of God. And the willing answer to the voice of God provides a way by which this may be. Because by this means a

man goes, not where his gifts seem to make him welcome, not where the needs of the Church seem to invite him, but where God sends him. We are poor judges of the needs of the Church. Think what would happen in an army on an alarm if, when the trumpets sounded for action, every man sprang to the post where he thought he was most needed, or where he thought the fight likely to be hottest. That would create fatal confusion. No, the safe course is for each man to go where he is *sent*, according to a judgment and a scheme which are outside his information altogether. The listening for vocation is a means by which we escape from the mere rearrangement of the assets of our natural resources, and open a door for the entrance of divine wisdom.

II. Now it is time to find a word of answer for those who say, "I am not aware of this vocation; I do not experience this call; I have never heard that voice;" to say something about the way in which vocation may be apprehended and found. To begin with, let us part with a phrase which is too often heard, "Such and such a person has no vocation." Everyone has his vocation. Every Christian has waiting for him a current in that great

stream of God's voice which issues from His eternal Throne and from His heart, and which is, as it were, a river along which the loyal spirits of every age swim and move, going up through difficulties and hardships to His light which is their home. In this great stream of the voice, whether we welcome it or not, there waits for every one of us his own particular note, an utterance meant for him alone. "I have called thee," saith God, "by thy name." And when a man enters into that current of the voice he knows indeed a fresh joy, it is the new name which he begins to hear. He finds himself accepted and adopted into the ancient company of the valorous, the humble, and the obedient. He finds himself no longer an alien, but a fellow-citizen with the Saints and belonging to the household of God, and he knows the joy of sharing a glorious service with all those for whom Jesus Christ is a sufficient reward. "But," some will say, "how shall I know it? I do not hear it; I do not even know what I am 'going to be,' and if I am partly certain, for example, that I wish to be ordained, I do not know where I am to go. I do not recognise this inward voice. I have never gone beyond the advice of wiser friends,

and how shall I come to have this joy of a call heard, accepted, and obeyed?" The answer, though it appear insufficient, is plain. The answer is, Live according to the *notion* of vocation; live as one who expects to be called; live in the spirit of obedience, like Samuel when he said, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth." Live according to that law and the voice will reach you. Those who complain that the voice reacheth them not are sometimes those who have trusted entirely to their own wits, or who have given themselves up to the consideration of their interests, or have tried to go where service might be splendid, or have looked to see where sacrifice might be hard. Some of these things are good in their place, but if they have *sway* over us, if they are allowed a *determining* influence, they interrupt the secret voice of vocation. We must be men whose ears are open, waiting for the voice, living *according to* vocation, under the notion of obedience, and then the invitation to obedience will reach us.

Moreover we have to remember what we stated at the beginning, that the special vocation to a service or a state of life is part of the one great "high calling of God

in Christ Jesus," the call to grace, to virtue, and to heaven. Therefore, we must look for our special call *along the lines of salvation*, by the ways of penitence, of purity of heart, of desire to learn the will of God. We must be eager to go to communion, and in hidden prayer to seek Jesus Christ for ourselves. And as we seek Him and find Him for ourselves, so we shall find what He would have us to do. Indeed, He chose you, my brother, for work, before you chose Him for salvation; and as you follow on to know the Lord it is that you may apprehend Him of Whom already you are apprehended for the special work He reserves for you in His kingdom. While yet you struggle in the amazement of penitence, *you* also are "called to be a messenger, separated unto the gospel of Christ." In the time when no voice sounds, let hope be unconquered. That which seems to be a chamber of disappointment, the prison of Joseph where the iron entered his soul, the dark sick-room of Saul one day to be more willingly the prisoner of Jesus, will prove the gate-house of the gospel road on which He sends us forth, "to bear His name before Gentiles and kings," and even to suffer

great things for His sake. Let us, therefore, live in the spirit and hope of vocation,—not by impulse, not by habit, not by the mere calculation of results, but in the temper of a slave who listens for his master's call,—and the voice will come.

III. And now I must snatch a moment to speak of the dangers which surround the doctrine of the voice. It is true that they are rare, but it is true also that they are very serious. There have been lives most earnest, most spiritually minded, most trusting to that inward voice, and yet, by some error in that trust, by some want of completeness in it, driven to disappointment, to despondency, almost to rebellion against God. The poor soul murmurs as if the voice had deserted him in the wilderness. His complaints are like those of the people of Israel: "Thou hast taken us from the land where there were duties and wages, bread and the means of winning bread, and Thou hast brought us into this desolate place, where there is neither task nor pay; and our soul is sick of this light food." There is the danger; the danger of despondency, of disappointment, and of rebellion. And there is the

almost opposite danger of irresponsible fickleness, of perpetually changing the direction of effort. There is the man who repeatedly abandons his task, who leaves his associates unsupported, and continually seeks after fresh fields ; who rejects as profane the plainest indications of providence, and makes vocation an excuse for the reckless following of impulse.

These are real dangers. How can we guard against them ? We only add to them by judging one another. In no single region can judgment be more perilous. It is impossible without inspiration to distinguish between a superstition which puts impulse in the place of the Divine voice, and an enlightened faith which not only undertakes but (which is far harder) abandons a good work in obedience to the Divine Spirit—that Spirit by whom Paul was "not suffered" to preach in Asia. But each for himself can and must guard against the error which is so plainly possible—the error of enthroning impulse, and calling that life God-centred which has no pivot of ascertained duty.

IV. We are to guard against it by a due reverence for circumstance ; by believing that in this also is at least God's *restraining* govern-

ment, the tonic action of the Church's body. Circumstance is correlative to the inward monition. And more especially we must reverence that which is, when carnally considered, only a circumstance of God's general providence, but which in its real truth is higher and nearer to Him, namely the external government which comes to us in the Church. This also is of Christ, of the Spirit; this is to balance our inward conviction of calling. The fixed order of the Church, and the particular utterance of the Church's living rulers; the order of the Church as an organised body calling with authority for our service, and the voice of the Church coming for especial needs through its consecrated rulers; these two are provided to protect us from impulses mistaken for the Bridegroom's voice, and to protect us from the despondency which comes from fruitless effort. We have, therefore, to listen carefully for these, while we pray for grace against despondency and against misleading impulse. Nor must we be unprepared for long delays, nor think that delay discredits that which we believed to be a call. The true creative word of God does not fail or pass away because it is not

immediately accomplished. Vocation, indeed, does fail and pass away in certain cases. There is such a thing as losing a vocation once possessed. But the vocation fades only when *we* neglect it or reject it. It does not grow stale or old because in the divine providence there are not means for us at once to fulfil it. Think of Joseph. When God sent him before His people, his slavery was not his *vocation.* What was his vocation? His vocation lay in those mystical manifestations of God to him in dreams long before. The vocation was antecedent to that strange journey, but the journey also was God's work. Nevertheless, see how his life was shaped. First he received the holy vocation, he caught the voice; and then came the strange tangle of circumstance which seemed to interrupt altogether the prepared work. He who knew that he must rule over his brethren was in their grip; he was cast into the pit, he was sold to the merchants, compromised by a vulgar woman, and abandoned in the prison. Yet in due time God threw back the prison gates, and the holy impulse revived in him; the gracious promise was fulfilled and the early monitions were realised, when Joseph

was sent to rule over his people, and to save them in the time of dearth, doing a work which was part of that great plan of life by which Jesus Christ came into the world. For it was by Joseph's ministry, because he was stripped, and sold, and entrapped, and imprisoned, that there was bread for Israel, and the survival of the chosen race, and David the King, and Mary the maiden of the Lord, prepared to be the Mother of the Eternal Word.

It is good to remember all this, when the frame of things seems set against our hopes, or when, worse still, there is *nothing* in our life, not even difficulties to combat; when the good girl, who wished to be a missionary, finds herself at home in the carpeted rooms of a London suburb, with the wearisome amusements and the trifling duties of social life; when the man who hoped to be a monk, to lay down his life for the poor, or to carry divine truth to the heathen, finds himself well fed and surrounded with consideration in a comfortable English pulpit. We have to bear up in these times, and to remember Joseph in the pit and St. Paul in the sick-room, and to use the days to the full

in the constant effort to apprehend Jesus Christ in our own souls.

And, lastly, we are to find our chief joy in the acceptance, day by day, of the will of God as it is, not knowing what it is, but knowing that at last the voice shall lead us out into broad ways of work and plenteous accomplishments of sacrifice. We need not be afraid of that implicit acceptance of the will of God. Why should we shrink from choosing that will to-day, not knowing what for to-day it is? We speak and think of the will of God as if it were some dark river of which we could not tell the issue. But in truth we know the end, and because we know the end we may trust the beginning. We know whither it leads—to perfect sacrifice, perfect death of self, perfect conformity to Christ, perfect love. We know that the will of God is our sanctification and His own glory; and because we know this—the far-off end which is attached to the throne of His love, therefore we contentedly accept the nearer links which belong to the same chain, although they seem dull and uninviting to our grasp. The golden chain is one, and the far-off attachment cannot be separated from the

rough length within our hands. Therefore, day by day, as each day passes, we heartily accept that which He provides for us, only earnest for our daily gain continually to press on to know Him, Who is not only our salvation, but our Lord also and our Guide—the Way, the Truth, and the Life, in union with Whom alone our spirits breathe, and by Whose grace alone we can enter upon the good works which He has prepared for us to walk in.

CONTINUITY

CONTINUITY[1]

"Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that through patience and through comfort of the scriptures we might have hope." —ROMANS xv. 4.

IN the epistle for this week a certain method of God is disclosed as operating within the special sphere of the heavenly hope, and in the training of those who look for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. In this method three factors are distinguished; the record of the past, the hope of the future, and the patience and comfort of the day which passes —patience in enduring afflictions and in maintaining labour, comfort of the written word found available for daily life.

That which is the appointed method of disciplined encouragement for the redeemed society is the process also of every form of

[1] A sermon preached in substance at Charterhouse in London, on Founder's Day, in the second week of Advent, A.D. 1900.

social life in the degree of its reality and worth. In so far as the social endeavour partakes of the spirit and truth of the Gospel, it partakes also of the necessity and the benefit of continuity; it knows the sacredness of the recorded past, the forward direction of present toil and conflict. And that which may be called the historical method of divine instruction is seen to operate with special clearness in a great foundation like that of Thomas Sutton for which we are bound to praise God to-day, a foundation which is not only a part of our national life, but an organ of the Church of Christ. In such a school as ours, if anywhere at all, is the full vigilance of the twofold regard, the regard of the past and of the future. Here the two efforts will be equally maintained, the effort to preserve the great memory of accomplished work and battles won, the effort to prepare for and to prepare the progress of the days to come.

And as in the sphere of worship and explicit faith so here, the double duty, vividly impressed by the convention even of a dying century, is accomplished by finding in the present moment a field of meeting, and in the treatment of living minds a

method of combination. It is not by the mechanical storage of ancient rolls that the true continuity of a nation or a school is secured, any more than it is by the material custody of inspired Scriptures that the Church lives from age to age. The claims of past and future are only united in the common reality of present joy and strength and truth, the reality of instructed lives. Our method both of loyalty and of hope is found in the right culture of the individual, according to the lesson won from the past, and for the sake of the future and of the whole. We know that the old contrast between the interest of the man and the interest of the Church or of the nation is hollow and unreal. We know that the claim of the body is the duty and opportunity of the member, and that the life of the body is constituted in the health of all its parts. "What is good for the hive is good for the bee." When to the conception of the whole and the constituents is added the notion of succession in time, we see, as an equally necessary truth, that the vast future of the society—(for the future of every society which is not dying is always vast in comparison with its present life)—is that which gives importance

to the present, and yet depends entirely upon the present for its life. There, in the present, is the reality which combines the old and that which is to be; there is the meeting-place of memory and hope; there, for example in our own case, in the stream of vigorous life which actually passes through the great school to-day as on many yesterdays; a stream of life which in its perpetual youth within the limits of the school possesses a kind of corporate permanence by which it seems to stand over against the one true Permanence, the one abiding Present which is in God "our refuge from one generation to another." Regard for the past, preparation of the future, culture of the life under our hands, these in a Christian school find their effective centre in the practical reverence of God's Majesty — His Presence, His Claim, His Grace; in the love of the Father bestowed by His Spirit and energising daily in that life of ours which, by the ancient gift, is in his Son Jesus Christ.

A pair of converse statements will define the lesson we propose to gain. On the one hand present life misses its preparation for the future if it neglects the ancient records.

On the other hand those records are truly preserved only when they are enshrined in actual lives. It is at our peril that we hand them on unstudied to a future which may reap from our indolence the inability to understand the bare letter we transmit. True Conservatism, true Futurism, if there may be such a word, find themselves only in the steady maintenance of a stream of life; and continuity is for a generation that which the fact and knowledge of corporate interests are for the individual—the security of a strength which perishes in isolation.

The past has left its contemporary records, "things written aforetime, written for our learning." It has also left its inevitable effects. There is history, and there is also heredity. It is impossible to escape from both. But we may have the inheritance without knowing the history, the steed without the bridle, the transmitted task without the traditional skill. Of necessity, we are all of us linked with the past of our race, and are ourselves in some sense the result of lives spent long ago. We cannot for a moment be free of our connection, though we can by choice or discipline develope or repress the bad and good elements which alike

come woven in the strand of natural descent. There is choice, but it is in a given stock that the selection is exercised. And besides the stream of physical descent there is an almost necessary inheritance for the mind,—conventions, notions, prejudices which come if not in the blood yet by a link which is practically as strong. All this to be true requires larger reservations than are commonly made. But even if we take the notion of necessary inheritance in its bald strictness, it remains true that the higher, and after all stronger, elements of the past come to us along the channels of consciousness, channels which are widely opened or nearly closed according to the state of personal discipline. The "threshold" of our modern psychology is not an immovable threshold. It rests with us and those who care for us to lower it so that it admits a broad stream of light into the conscious mind, or to allow it to rise so high as to leave consciousness almost a stagnant pool. All the past is ours to take. But its higher elements reach us not in the blood but by the stream of consciousness, in the channels of knowledge, of reflection, and of sympathy. And consequently the connection which may be merely necessary and mechanical takes

on a higher character, and liberates forces of higher origin, as it becomes increasingly intelligent, moral, and grateful.

It is thus that by admiration and interest and trust we acquire and use the best of that of which we cannot but inherit the lower and more indifferent elements. We who have the appetites of Shakespeare's men are to covet their generous devotion. Upon Founder's Day then, and in this venerable place, where the uninteresting age of common activity is contrasted for the hour with the rival dignities of veteran leisure and of unbroken youth,[1] we may be allowed to reflect a little further upon those three principles of memory and discipline and hope, as they are actually expressed in that great association which binds us all together; in the Charterhouse which we loved in childhood, but which we love more warmly still to-day, and shall love to the end.

I. The Memory of the Past.

To make our share in the past thus conscious and loving, is a principal part of the duty of such a foundation as ours: to cultivate

[1] The reference is to the presence of former masters of the school, of the Pensioners of Sutton's Hospital, and of the boys of the school who come from Godalming for the Commemoration.

in living minds the ancient high thoughts and great endeavours of men, to maintain deliberately according to a pure tradition a worthy form of life, to enshrine in a perpetually new utterance of praise the record of ancient saving facts.

There are other places—and these in our great need to recover lost ground have their real function—where the purpose of deliberate continuity is less conspicuous; where the results of ancient labour are given (and perhaps of necessity) without explanation of their growth, and where the surface of the passing current of discovery and conjecture is mapped and described for the benefit of a generation which is regarded as if mysteriously self-made. Such work is as worthy and as necessary as the rapid arming of citizens in a beleaguered town. But it is a work stamped with the mark of compulsion. We would do better if we could. And it belongs to a University or a Public School to illuminate the path of our spiritual descent; and just as such a place maintains the culture of ancient Greece and Rome, and the memory of deeds which made the life of Europe and of England, so also it must hold up to loving wonder the sacred origins of the

Christian life, and refuse to part with the days of Moses and of David, the days of the Apostles and of the Son of Man.

II. These memories it applies to the Culture of the Present.

It has been said by Amiel[1] that the great need of our age is a translation of "Christianity from the domain of history into the domain of Psychology." This judgment we can well accept if the word Ethics is added to Psychology; for our self-government at least as much as our self-consciousness needs to be Christianised. And further, we must take "translation" in such a sense as will not imply the abandonment of either sphere. To adopt for a moment the meaning connected with languages, we may submit that the need of the translation only makes doubly evident the need of the original,—the indispensable character of that historical Gospel which remains fruitless for us until it becomes the life of Christ in the heart, but without which we have no material for the inward transcript. It is in producing for the living generation the true personal version of the great past that the work of our school consists. And it is a work accomplished for the

[1] Quoted in Gardner's *Exploratio Evangelica.*

sake of the future which must find in us its secure continuity with the old good things; for the sake of the progress of which we have sometimes spoken as if it must come by itself, by the mere succession of days, and the mere lapse of generations.

III. True hope knows its ground. The Preparation of the Future is a work deliberately accepted and consciously examined.

What then is this progress for which we long, and of which our very poverty seems to contain the promise? Surely, we are inclined to say, some good thing is on its way for us. Surely our long moment of *inertia*, of moral stagnation and intellectual silence, is preface to a day of great things, a day of more generous speculation and more exacting curiosity, and, above all, of a recovered spirit of devotion and sacrifice.

So we might have spoken lately; and already we have seen the dawn of a more vigorous unselfishness, and strong lights which break through the mist of merely physical success. The heroism we have witnessed in all ranks has recalled us to recognise that progress, either in England or our school, will be something different from an accumulation of the physical

apparatus of comfort—something more even than the multiplication of intellectual opportunities. Information we must have and shall have in plenty, and in far greater plenty the improvements of health and comfort, at least for that part of mankind which makes itself heard. But when all this has gone far beyond our present notions of luxury, will it be progress? Is this the good thing for which Charterhouse boys are trained, and is even the diffusion of this—though diffusion is a great advance beyond reservation—the cause to serve which we would hold together all through our lives?

No; however it may be served by the extension and greater community of the means of life and knowledge, Progress *in itself* is undoubtedly the growing liberation of the spirit of man, an unfolding of life, and of life in its highest form. It was to give this life and make it grow that the Word of God came to us in the Incarnation. "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." "Whoso hath the Son hath life." It is in Christ that life is given, and we are not ignorant in what direction, in what energies of our own being, to look for the measure of its increase.

The development of true life is seen, we know, in the expansion of love, in the widening circles of self-devotion. Here we have a distinct and readable scale of progress which relieves us of all the confusion made by rival tests of material advance. A modern form which all may accept is given to it by the great Italian political teacher, Mazzini. You remember his successive steps of right and duty. As the individual subdues the claims of impulse to the claims of integrity; as next he forgets his rights in favour of his duty to the neighbour and to the country; as the dutiful service of the many builds up the community, and the community grows to know that the very right by which it claimed the citizen's duty must in turn give way to a larger duty still, the duty which recognises the right of the whole world—in this succession of duty absorbing the rights which yet it preserves, we have true progress, a distinct development of the great reality of life. It is a progress which, just so far as it is genuine, points on to, though it cannot by itself arrive at, a fulfilment in which the rights even of mankind, absorbing all separate and lesser claims, would be yielded and lifted higher at the supreme demand of the duty owed by all mankind to God. In

such a fulfilment, sovereign rule would rest on perfect obedience, and love triumphant in a redeemed world would manifest the power of Christ's grace to the glory of God the Father.

We are not to wait to render our obedience until the world carries us to God's feet. It is in the One true Man that obedience and love have already their perfection, and we are to partake of this by adhering to His Person. Yet we are not left without signs of this growth of love, which is true progress, in the world we know. Rather, that world is full of examples which rebuke either despondency or sloth or coldness.

Africa has been the scene this year of the unselfish and uncalculating devotion of thousands of men like ourselves and of our blood; men who twelve months ago shared the safe routine of our city life, or enjoyed the patriarchal liberty of lands as distant mentally from South Africa as they are from our own. These men from the security of English homes, or the hitherto unburdened newness of Greater Britain, sprang at once to certain hardship and probable sacrifice under the impulse of the love of Queen and country, of race, and of just freedom.

In this work of patriotism and justice there are labourers whom we might claim as ours. But at a time when every distinction of race within these islands and the colonies, every limitation of class and quality, every difference of party and domestic ideal have been obliterated in presence of a common peril and a common duty,—when the banners of great rival interests have been cast aside for the sake of prompt obedience to the signal of national allegiance; it is not, perhaps, at a time when the opponents of yesterday stand by us in our need, and dethroned princes bring their wealth to the service of our wounded, that we can claim for Charterhouse a special right of pride in men whom the Empire delights to honour. But we claim our dead. In our hearts their names have a special home, and grateful affection towards all who have died for us is quickened as we mourn for the men to whom we are personally bound. To-night, I believe, we shall presently have the opportunity of remembering name by name the men of our school who have, in God's mercy, laid down their lives *pro patria;* men such as Cecil Keith-Falconer, whom I mention here not as being dearer to us all than others are—his own brother is among them—but only

because of those who are recorded he is one whose example of true dignity and courage was an influence to brace and discipline one's own days at school.

Will there be any corresponding movement in England for the reinforcement of the very slender forces serving the Gospel in Africa—the Gospel which alone, by its true translation into the terms of mind and life, can either explain to aliens what is good in us or draw together in working unity the races which nature and rival interests have thrown into conflict? Will Charterhouse, which has its share in the sacrifice of war, claim its share also in the much more lasting work of bearing light and peace, the knowledge of God, the discipline of the law of love? In that country the natives, to whose good order and loyalty we owe more than can be well measured in England, are sometimes harshly judged or ignorantly despised. Those races are not perishing races, nor races which develope quickly because their course of development is short and their limit of cultivation soon to be reached. In presence of the white nations their numbers rapidly increase. The pure dark races of South Africa are only beginning their course, and they are bringing

to the work of civilised life not only unspoilt physical vigour but an intelligence capable of solid instruction, the temper—taking one tribe with another — which is needed for social life and advancing responsibility, and an unusual power to apprehend the highest truth and to respond to the most generous motives that we are able to present to them. What the native may be under careless or fickle management it is no use to ask as a guide to his true capacity. Nor for this purpose of judgment is it any use to ask what he may become under the influence of a half-hearted morality, or a half-christianised instruction. But we rightly examine the consequences of such indolent and ungenerous evangelisation if we do so in order to supply by our own diligence the honest discipline and the thorough teaching of the gospel which, with the sacraments of life, enable men to walk in truth and purity and in the reality of brotherly love. Under the care which English Churchmen can and do give, the African becomes such a Christian as any believing man would wish to be. In real native converts we seem to see with a new clearness the power of Christ working by the Divine Spirit. This is not a time to meet

and analyse statements very opposite to these. It must be enough to leave my own statement in bold contrast to those in which it is sought to discredit both the races committed to our charge and the gospel with which we are entrusted for their help.

To the small group of men who at present do all that the Church of England does for native Africans, and to the larger but still slender band of those who minister to our own countrymen scattered in that immense country, will Charterhouse make a good share of the large addition which is confidently expected from England? Our home mission, the mission in Southwark, is giving its best. We who belong to the inner circle of that mission, who do not love it better than you do, but who have been tied to it in a special intimacy by the bonds of regular duty, we are not without the strong consciousness of loss when we give up to Africa the man[1] who has been for thirteen years, I think, the devoted servant of the poor for Christ's sake in that spot of London which is so dear to us. May we not hope that Charterhouse men

[1] The Rev. W. L. Vyvyan, ordained in 1888 assistant curate for the Charterhouse Mission, Southwark: in charge of the mission since 1892, and now proceeding to Zululand.

will be found at the next vacancy trained, as he was trained, for the complete charge of the mission by some years of loyal and affectionate comradeship with our present chief? May we not hope that the laymen, who from the first and all along till now have been the mainstay of the mission's work and the bearers of continual encouragement to the resident clergy, will see the gaps which time must make in their band filled up readily by younger Carthusians?

We may not look further in detail into the work which lies ready for Charterhouse and which Charterhouse is doing. To name the Mission in the Borough; to think, without naming them, of the manifold activities of men whom we might claim in the great charges of the country and the empire; to remember our heroic dead; and lastly, to recall that fair place, the new hill of our Sion, where the boyhood of England, choicest of spiritual material, passes to-day under the influence of men trained by long experience to the wisest zeal and the most watchful sympathy;—these things are enough to stir us to thank God with all our souls, as we reflect how large a share Charterhouse may have in the future of the Church and of England, if only it is

really, through all its ranks of age, "a band of men whose hearts God hath touched"—if Christ, the abiding element of our humanity, the sole boast of our past history, the standing Captain of all true progress, is the inward treasure of the lives He long ago redeemed.

Since these words were written, our national bereavement has given a new emphasis to the great duty which may be called that of corporate perseverance. It belongs to us at this moment to preserve in ourselves, and to hand on by a communication surer than that of words, the great Victorian tradition. When one reflects that the event, as it seems, of yesterday—the Queen's first Jubilee—is probably not within the memory of twenty boys now at Charterhouse full of vigour and thought, the swift movement of the generations is brought home to one, and the need of a deliberate purpose to secure those good things into which we were born, and especially the steadfast recognition of Almighty God which was characteristic of the Queen.

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